

Wartime Memories on Hayling Island

Noel Pycroft and John Rogers



Wing Commander Jan P. Falkowski, V.M., K.W., D.F.C. No. 303 Polish
"Kosciuszko" Fighter Squadron.

Memories of the Sinah Gun Site by Hazel Gould (née Plumbly) and an
extract from Havant in the Second World War by Ralph Cousins

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**THE HAYLING ISLAND
BOOKSHOP**



Noel and Valerie Pycroft with a piece of the parachute worn by one of the aircrew who bailed out from the Wellington bomber that crashed near to Thorney Island on 28 December 1940. The airman landed near to Pilsey Island but unfortunately did not survive. Most of the parachute was shared out between their relations who turned it in to silk underwear. The Bomber Command War Diaries note for this date: *France: 75 aircraft to factory at Bordeaux and 10 ports and airfields. 1 Blenheim and 1 Wellington lost; 4 aircraft crashed in England.* It is most likely that this aircraft was one of the four.

These wartime memories are an extract from *Hayling, An Island of Laughter and Tears* by Noel Pycroft

My love of the family home, church and people I have shared my life with has given me – instilled by my parents from childhood – a lasting interest in all things in this world, especially of Hayling Island, its history, development, work and worship.

I have seen everything from early aircraft to supersonic monsters, horses and carts to lorries carrying 40 tons. From children poorly fed and clothed to our throw-away society – a far better if discontented world; progress goes on.

In writing this book I have only scraped the surface of what I have heard, seen and recorded in my memory of a way of life now long gone. I myself am solely responsible for the text with any virtues it may have and all its faults.

I wish future generations a happy life on our Creator's lovely Hayling – my home.

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Also to Terry Day and many others for their insistence that I write this book and to many others for tolerating my questions over so many years and using their time talking to me. Lastly to Vic Pierce Jones for his help and encouragement at all times.

Dedicated to my sons Christopher and Ian AND,
of course, my long suffering wife, Valerie.



Mother aged 40, in her Land Army uniform on her milk round in 1944.

My War and Post War Memories on Hayling Island

And so to the war. I was 10, my brother Basil 13 and my young brother Derek 8. My mother joined the Women's Land Army and worked for her father doing a milk round. She left home at 4.30 each morning and returned at 5 p.m. to prepare the meals. Father worked on the farms and had a permit to shoot and fish although gunpowder and shot were in short supply. A pigsty was erected and a pig bought so enabling us to have pork and bacon.

The pig was killed by Harry Brede who was a former signaller on the Southern Railway. The pork was salted and saltpetre rubbed into the opened joints. It was then carried to Havant Station on the bar of my bicycle and put on a train to Fratton. From there it was transported to the Danish Bacon Company at their Eastleigh Dépôt for smoking. The killing of the pig was a morning's entertainment. Once, Doreen Riley, while delivering the morning paper, on seeing the pig's head coming out of the tub, which was made out of a half hogshead barrel, went a peculiar shade of green, fainted, and dropped the papers on the wet ground. In 1939, or early forties, a labour force of French, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian and German men, nearly all Jews, were employed to dig a trench for an electric cable to Yachthaven. Gunther Lasarus could throw a pebble many metres further than anyone else. Whilst busy at this work they found a hoard of George III pennies and all the children had some.

Mr Braun, a Czechoslovakian, drove a tractor for the War Agriculture Committee. He cried when talking to my father of his wife and family as he was harrowing the field next door. Yugoslavs were employed to dig ditches, they wore funny grey uniforms and hats. We used trugs when picking up potatoes.

We collected emblems, badges and buttons from the troops. Aeroplanes were landing on Thorney Island. The first one to crash was a Blenheim bomber that went upside down on the sand at Pilsey Island. Three airmen got out and the wreckage was used by us to catch lobsters. In 1940 I saw two Swordfish collide in the sky; the engine of one is still on All Rythe mud. One pilot was killed. Many bodies were found on the beach and various other things were washed up. Toolly Kennet shouted out during one dinnertime, 'the men on

the rifle range have shot at me and blown a hole in my boat big enough for a donkey and cart to walk through'. On careful inspection a one-inch diameter hole was discovered but by then Toolly was getting over his shock and realised it was a marksman playing the fool with a gun.

I cycled to Chichester with my brother Derek and cousin Don Foster to our cousins Terry and Don Harmer to see a German Junkers 88 bomber that had crashed 200 yards from their house. On another occasion a British Blenheim bomber crashed in Eastney Field. We arrived at the end of St Peters Avenue and on just going through the hedge and into a ditch there was a loud 'boom' as one of the petrol tanks exploded. I was pushed to the bottom of the ditch by a fireman who lay on top of me to protect me from the parts of the aircraft that were flying about. The plane was about 300 yards away and in full flame. The man who risked his life to protect me was Jack Cottle who originally came from the Radstock area of Somerset and then from Wales, Aberdare I believe. He was badly injured outside the Ship Inn at Langstone when he was a pillion passenger on Skinner Wheeler's motorbike. They were in the fire service together at the water works. He had missed the bus so he rang for a lift home from Havant Railway Station after having attended his father's funeral in Wales. Ron Wheeler (Skinner) was killed. In later years Jack suffered with arthritis. My father, after seeing Jack at the school corner, came home to my mother and said he had seen a pitiful sight – Jack Cottle's hands were crippled, those hands that had wielded a pick and shovel with the dexterity only a miner can. 'Is there no God?' he asked my mother, being a thoughtful man dad worried over Jack.

In 1940 the Battle of Britain commenced and reached its height in August by which time many bombs had been dropped on Hayling Island. The first fell in the rabbit warren at the Pound and another fell in Hollow Lane killing Henry Jones, the Portsmouth builder, and his secretary and shattered the glasshouses in South Road belonging to MacMurray. Also one fell at the end of Palmerston Road at 3.30 on a Saturday afternoon as the film *Beau Geste* was being shown at the Regal Cinema. The lights went out as a cannon was fired in the film. Mrs Fred Spencer and her granddaughter were both killed. The Spencers, who came from the Six Bells public house in Havant, had received a poison pen letter telling them to go back to Havant in no uncertain

words. A lovely family. Fred would thrash a man but never harm an animal, his daughter Frances could do all the drills with dumb-bells.

The concrete anti-tank blocks were built by Lascar seamen from the Mission to Seamen Hostel, Southampton, together with local labour. These seamen had been on ships that had been sunk. Leslie Dollery and I were on the beach collecting whatever was going, barrage balloon elastic for catapults etc., when three German Messerschmit ME-109s came along the beach dropping small bombs. They had started by machine-gunning the Treagusts fishing in the *Pamela* on Eastoke Point. They then flew west at wave top height machine-gunning the Lascars. Sidney Kennett pulled us into a pillbox that was in front of what is now the Inn on the Beach. The Lascar cry of 'hum deck hoi', which translated means all is well, was not heard only the terrible piercing shrieks of terror as they ran into the gorse bushes, which resulted in many scratches but there were no casualties. We children had to collect these men after the 109s had headed back towards France. This was, I think, in August as it was lovely weather but even so the Lascars had comforting long scarves on.

A great many bombs fell on Hayling, the largest crater being on Verner Common. Some fell so deep in the field that they formed a surface like a piecrust which gradually subsided. Arbuthnot's pig farm and chicken batteries were nearly destroyed with only a few sheds remaining. West Town was flattened by a land mine on 17 April 1941 at 9 p.m. Incendiary Bombs fell everywhere; the gorse was set alight in front of St Georges Road which, like many roads, was not tarmaced. Some of the Incendiary Bombs were still in a drum-like container.

Decoy lights were erected on the oyster banks; these were shed-like structures on stilts with electric power cables stretching from the West Lane Command Post a mile away. They were switched on when enemy aircraft approached in the night; the drone of the German Dornier bombers was clearly distinguished by the boom-boom of their engines, diesel I believe. One morning at daybreak shots were fired at Uncle Bert's fishing boat, the sail being just visible above the mud, but there was only a hole in the sail. At that time everyone was on edge.

In about 1941 or early 1942, Jim Poore, on Home Guard duty in a pillbox at Eastoke Point in the moonlight, heard foreign voices and surmised the speakers were upset at being stranded on the harbour bar. The voices had carried over the water from a German E-boat [Enemy motor torpedo boat] that fired several shots at the pillbox, one of which penetrated the wall and Jim got his uniform dirty. Then the blessed boat went back to France leaving the Home Guards to brew their tea on a primus stove in shocked silence.

On 8 May 1944 my mother was arrested for breaching movement restrictions. She was caught carrying milk, in an emergency, to a 'new mother' who lived in an out of bounds house. Lady Mackworth often speaks of this incident as she was the 'new mother'.

As we were swimming in the creek alongside Yachthaven a low-flying German Junkers 87 machine-gunned the sheds and we were in the line of fire. Several of us stayed in the water and some got into the ditch. This all caused a great deal of excitement but there were no casualties.

At another time we were in the meadow when three aircraft came in low from the harbour mouth. Thinking they were British Blenheims we ran down to the bank and waved, a wave was returned and then we saw the black crosses on the German Heinkel planes. We were lucky as they had man-killers onboard. They machine-gunned Yachthaven but missed, and then hit the roofs in Sunnyside taking off slates and put a bullet into Ted Everall's car, which was parked at the Maypole public house. These planes then went on the rampage to Purbrook and down the Hulbert Road, Bedhampton, killing Mrs Bill Luff. One of these was shot down by Spitfires and crashed by Woodberry Lane, Rowlands Castle. Another, on fire, crashed at Church Norton with one man dying of bullet wounds. The pilot called Smidt became a prisoner of war and on a fairly recent trip to the graves of German airmen on Thorney Island said he did not machine-gun anywhere. They were flying at about 150 feet and we saw them wave. The three aircraft were at wave-top height at the mouth of the harbour before turning at the entrance of Mill Rythe.

On a Sunday afternoon we saw 24 German Junkers 87s dive bomb Thorney Island, one flew into the ground and the others were pounced on by our

Hurricane fighter planes, I believe four enemy planes were shot down locally but we did not clearly see as they came out after their dive over West Wittering. In all 10 failed to return home. The Hurricanes were up high waiting and I am sure the legless pilot Douglas Bader was one of those marksmen.

When an air raid was in progress, or expected, three British Handley Page Hampden bombers, double tailed aircraft, took off regularly and flew around Thorney Island. One day father said, 'there are four of those planes today'. The one flying low at the back then changed course and bombed Thorney Island before flying out to sea. It had been a German Dornier 17Z-2, which looked very similar to a Hampden. Father said, 'that man was an expert and probably a poacher in civilian life as he carried out a ruse of deceit very well'.

Mother, riding to work one morning with her sister Isobel, saw what she thought was a large tent in the field next to the Maypole public house. It was not a tent at all but an unexploded land mine with its green parachute draped all over it. Father found a parachute in the harbour and another in Sinah Lane. He also found one at the station end of Sinah Lane near to the home at that time of Sir Oliver Crosswaite Ayre, a Captain in the Royal Marines, who later became Member of Parliament for the New Forest where his home was at Brook. A piece of parachute cord was still tied to a tree at Albertville, Copse Lane, in 1988.

On 16 January 1941 between 8.30 and 9.00 p.m. our family were in an Anderson shelter at our home in Woodgaston Lane, North Hayling, when, during an air raid, we heard a loud swishing noise and a thump of an aircraft hitting the ground. We then heard the family at Dunsloggin, Mr and Mrs Fred Rogers and her sisters Eileen, Mary and Vera Ayres, calling to each other. We assumed the aircraft had crashed close to their house, which it had, 100 yards NNW adjacent to Great Woods, 400 yards NW from us. It was a dark night with a slight wind and freezing; we heard a man call, 'cum queek' – then a moan or cry. My father said: "There is a German on the end of Verner Common." Germans were not very popular at that time due to their incessant bombing, of which they were making a habit, keeping us awake. I will not forget my mother's words which were, 'you boys run around the top of the

creek, there is some poor mother's son, he is hurt and frightened. Take a bicycle-lamp and towel; signal when you find him and shout if he is bleeding. Then I will run barefoot across the creek as the tide is out. I will bring my boots, a sheet and hot drink'.

Mother, at 36, was a resourceful and determined lady. In freezing conditions she was prepared to run 200 yards across the mud without boots as it would be quicker. In the meantime we ran the half-mile around; partly on the mud at the top of the creek. My father would come across with Fred White, who was visiting his mother-in-law next door, who he had called. Unfortunately Fred, in father's thigh boots, got stuck in the mud, which was 3 ft deep. It took some time to extricate him so he could go home and wash and as a result my father arrived later. On 9 November 1943 poor Fred lost his life as a rear gunner in a raid on Mannheim. His memorial stone is in Durnfelt Bavaria Military Cemetery. I am told a lovely peaceful place.

Meanwhile my brothers and I, at the age of 12, found the airman covered by his parachute with a compound fracture of the leg, but was not bleeding. He only had one boot on. He was unable to speak much English and was fainting but with a torch he illuminated his identity photograph that revealed he was Polish, a Flight Lieutenant Jan Falkowski, Royal Air Force. We signalled to mother that all was well. Jan had been on an evening patrol and had intercepted and shot down a German Heinkel 111 bomber returning from a raid on Portsmouth. However his aircraft had been seriously damaged by return fire and he had had to bale out.

My elder brother ran half a mile to Captain Morgan at Rose Kennel, Copse Lane, (now Broad Oak) who was the air raid warden. He rang the Royal Marines stationed in Sunshine Camp, now Mill Rythe Holiday Village. They came to his house in an ambulance and my brother guided their stretcher party to us. One marine twisted his ankle; it was dark and the ground was frozen and very rough.

Within two hours Jan was in Havant War Memorial Hospital. He managed to tell us he was flying from the Ringwood area. Mother had a letter of thanks from his Commanding Officer at Middle Wallop. I have since learned he was stationed with No. 32 Squadron where the pilots were mostly

Czechoslovakian.

We kept in close contact with Jan until 1948 and then he went to Canada. Letters ceased in 1954 but we did hear of his charmed life in his adopted country where he survived an air crash in the Rockies in 1965. In my opinion he was a very lucky man as it was only when trying to listen to the girls that we heard him call, no one else did. Without my father's intimate knowledge of the area and where the sound arose I am sure he would have perished as the tide covered the area later and it snowed heavily. I have the official record of his service to our country from the Royal Air Force Museum delivered by post 16 hours after my telephoned request. Good service by Royal Mail and R.A.F.M.

Something we picked up were dialects, 'Ee-by-goom' – Lancashire, 'Eee Lad' – Yorkshire etc. As the years have gone by I have learnt many dialects and peculiarities of expression, not of course getting them correct at all times thereby causing a lot of amusement, but now being partially deaf I do not do so well.

In 1995 I had to attend the Endoscopy Ward at the QA Hospital and had to sign in at the desk where a very nice lady asked my name. I asked her if she came from Dundalk and she replied no, Dublin. "You are pulling my leg" I said. Being a very disciplined lady she replied: "I should know where I was born and lived." Now, having heard her speak a few more words, I became more confident and asked her: "How does your mother cook a salmon?" and she replied: "Not my mother, my sister. When I was home a 3lb salmon was left in tin foil on our doorstep in the night, cleaned and ready to cook, my mother only had to add butter, lemon juice and parsley." By now, being really sure of myself, I said to this total stranger: "You have the audacity to tell me you lived in Dublin, I am sure four miles outside." She replied: "How do you, who I have never met before, know that? You are, of course, right." So much for dialects.

As I had 24 operations I saw her many times and enjoyed, with my wife, the conversations containing so much information and humour. Later, on attending the QA because the dog bit me, I again met this lady, Pat, who was so pleased to see me. She was working in Casualty after retiring from the

Endoscopy Ward. On 6 January 1998 I took my wife to Casualty with a suspected dislocated left thumb. Pat, so pleased to see us, asked Valerie, out of my hearing, 'how is my golden boy's health?' I am so glad that Valerie and I met Pat, a very sincere and thoughtful lady.

In 1934 Christopher Dalgety came to our house to go wildfowling with father. He was then living at Lockerly Hall, Romsey. Two or three times a year after that he went punt-gunning with dad who borrowed Johnny Gould's punt on many occasions. On leaving after a visit in January 1939 dad said: "The next time I will see you it will be in uniform." In the autumn of 1943 he appeared at our back door in the uniform of a Lieutenant Commander Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve; father was in Home Guard uniform.

Christopher had visited Spitsbergen in 1931 with Peter Scott and brought back widgeon, tufted duck and Brent goose eggs, which he gave me for my collection. He wrote a book in 1938 entitled *Wildfowling*. He had been seconded from the Royal Army Service Corps, Small Landing Craft, to the No. 1 Combined Operations Pilotage Parties whose headquarters were at the Hayling Island Sailing Club. His job was to take part in surveys of the French coast in the dark in small canoes, which were launched either from motor launches or submarines. He brought several of his companions to Victoria Cottage and went flight-shooting with Uncle Leonard and father at various places around the island according to wind and conditions. These are the names of some of them: Magnul, Nicholas Hastings, Geoffrey Henderson, Wilmot, and Peter Scott who was then stationed at *HMS Vernon* in torpedo boats. A book 'Secret Invaders' tells of their wartime exploits from the Hayling Island Sailing Club. Tom Thornycroft, aged about 60, went on one of these. From our fishing boat we watched a lot of experiments with frogmen and canoes. Christopher, who was born in 1907, travelled widely and died in 1980. Father and mother stayed with him when he was living in Radwell Mill, Baldock, Hertfordshire, in 1949/50.

As the war went on the crashing of many of our own aircraft was of concern and interest to us, regrettably most of the crews were killed but some escaped. The sight of five parachutes in the sky at one time landing in Sussex and the constant air raids made exciting lives for us children.

A German Starlight casing made a garden roller when filled with concrete. The rexine material from a crashed British Wellington bomber made carrier bags and a silk parachute from the same plane made underclothes for my family. The machine guns were unscrewed from the turret of that aircraft and along with other items were loaded into my Uncle Bert's punt during an easterly gale but the parachute harness was washed overboard with the guns and ammunition.

The landing barges being serviced at Mill Rythe brought Jack Peall into our midst, he was always a great help to our village where he remained. He moved to South Hayling, good Old Jack! A 'Z-Rocket' range was established and anti-aircraft, ack-ack, sites were built at the beginning of the war. We children spent a lot of time swimming in the summer.

The Northney Holiday Camp was taken over by the Royal Navy and used for the recuperation of torpedoed seamen. The Sunshine Holiday Camp was first used by the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry and then as a Royal Marines base. In the 1939-40 winter the huts were very cold and again in 1941-2 as they had no fires. Hundreds of birds died, fieldfare, redwings and waders.

The experimental dropping of silver paper to confuse radar was tried out and some was found on the ground by Leslie Dollery. Propaganda leaflets about the Dieppe Raid were also dropped. We kids took all this in our stride.

In the August of 1941 I started work as a butcher-boy, which kept me out of mischief on a Saturday. Later at the age of 12 I did three days a week in the mornings before school, sometimes my younger brother Derek helped me. My cousin, Donald Foster, worked on a Saturday for Fred Pope as did June Mitchell, Margaret Banks, Pat Mittens, Bill Lander and Sidney Tyler, all of us at West Town riding trade bikes. I also worked after school cleaning ducks, chickens and rabbits, Mrs Pope, née Philbrow, picked the birds. When I was 14 I worked full time cutting frozen meat into joints and boning lamb joints. Friday dinner was supplied by Mrs Pope and my mother arranged for my grandmother, Ada Powell, who lived only a short distance away, to supply Saturday dinner. Plum and apple pudding was a favourite dish of Mrs Pope. During this time, as mother was working, Derek and I cooked the dinner on alternate Sundays and darned our socks.

Once when I was in the shop Ernie King came in and asked, in a jocular way, of Fred Pope's progress with his wife in bed. Fred replied: "Not for 28 years." Ernie then burst into tears and ran out of the shop. In 1918 Fred was wounded and for three days suffered from frostbite while lying in a shell hole until he was rescued by Bill Copping, a Southbourne man who married a local girl, Daisy Crassweller. This event had put paid to any chance of him being a father again. Fortunately he had one son whom he adored and he loved all children. He was as a father to me but I did not understand until I was 36, and thought about the incident, what anguish he and his loving wife must have suffered, me being a happily married man.

On another occasion Mrs Pope sent for me on a very cold Sunday morning in really freezing weather. Mr Pope suffered from poor circulation and he wore breeches on his legs, which were swollen and ulcerated. He was not a man to drink liquor but he did have a bottle of navy rum in his cupboard. He was persuaded by Mrs Pope and I to drink a couple of wine glasses full of warmed-up rum, which would act as an anaesthetic as we attended to his ulcers. I stood behind him holding his back against the drape that was covering his Windsor chair and on which was embroidered the emblem of the Hampshire Regiment. Mr Pope had embroidered this emblem during his long lay-up in a bath chair for eight years. Mrs Pope then cut off his breeches – he did not flinch but cried in pain. He sent me to get a pair of large bell-bottomed navy trousers, which he wore on Monday back at work. The smelling ulcerated puss was contained in well-washed mutton-cloths that were changed after mealtimes. Boracic ointment was liberally applied by my hand. Like Mossy he was a very brave man but in a different way. I was then 15 so I was growing up and learning.

In 1942 men of the 2nd Division Canadian Army and others made a landing on Dieppe and were mown down like flies around a honey pot. The raid was not the success that had been hoped for. Leaflets about the raid were dropped in our brickfield in bundles.

The Buying of Victoria Cottage in July 1942.

Field and Palmer of Emsworth were authorised to auction the property on behalf of Windebank's trustees. Mr Jonathon Kennett, of Emsworth, who

owned oyster beds in the creek and many properties, was a keen purchaser and was asked by Mr Ruffle to start the bidding by his usual £100. Mr Kennett asked if the tenant wanted to buy his home. My father said: "Yes," to which Mr Kennett replied: "No bid from me then." My father could not have bid against a determined Jonathon Kennett, a wealthy man and former owner of the *Gypsey Queen*, a channel oyster and scallop dredger. I have known his grandson, Michael, for a few years and was sad to learn of his early death as through his grandfather's humane action Victoria Cottage became our own property thus enabling us to continue to live in 'Paradise'. Mother and father also bought the brickfield.

In 1944 I was delivering meat to Mrs Marshall, of Marshall's Corner, who was the daughter of David Phillips of Havant, the last foreman of the brickyard in Fishery Lane that closed in 1900 or thereabouts. She always gave me 3d a week, which I think she could ill afford. She poured the milk out of the bottle into a jug over which she placed a lace cover with beads round the outside. The telegraph boy, or postman, came to the door and handed Mrs Marshall a telegram and asked if there was a reply. She said: "No, I know the contents – my son Bill was killed four days ago I have not slept." Years afterwards her son Arthur told me she had little sleep for six weeks until she had a letter from one of the gun crew who was wounded alongside Bill and was in Netley Hospital. She dropped everything and, in spite of being about 70 years old, went immediately to Netley and returned satisfied. She learnt that Bill, who was the only one killed out of the crew of six, had died instantly. She had worried that her son had suffered. Bill was killed in Italy at Cescena on 24 November 1944. He was married with a wife in Rutland.

I saw several incidents regarding telegrams that were brought to Fred Pope's shop. The most inspiring concerned Mrs Bernard Acworth from Littlewood, West Lane, whose son Peter was lost on the submarine *HMS Untamed*. She was standing on the kerb holding the telegram saying: "He has died in defence of our great country; it is his and my sacrifice to keep us free" – a wonderful lady.

While delivering meat to Florence, a strict Chapel lady who always gave me 3d every fortnight, which I am sure she also could ill afford, she told me of

her encounter with Mrs Tankery in 1916 who, in front of a crowd, had pinned a white feather on her husband's jacket. He, Bert, came home in distress as he had volunteered three times for army service while serving in the Local Defence Volunteers, the earlier Home Guard. Flo, born at 46 Newcomen Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth, in 1890, knocked on Mrs Tankery's door with Bert's army rejection papers in her hand. On showing them she was told: "Go home you stupid woman!" Mrs Tankery finished up on the ground making peculiar squeaking noises and unable to extract a swan's feather, which had entered her mouth quill first and was 7 to 8 inches in. Flo was told by a bystander to pull out, which she did with difficulty. No more white feathers were used by this patriot on Hayling Island.

What I have neglected to write about is the kindness of all of Fred Pope's customers from rich to poor alike. These included Mrs Workman of Workman Clark, Belfast shipbuilders and shipbrokers, who was the first person in England to breed Alsatian dogs, then known as German Shepherds. She employed Bill Scarrat, a former rough rider in the USA Cavalry, who married Hester Fairbrother and I went to school with their children. Also Mrs Olivier, the wife of Arnold Olivier the uncle of Laurence Olivier, who was an artist whose work was shown in the Royal Academy. She was Lady Ann Peel before her marriage and a descendant of Robert Peel who we know as the instigator of the police force. Another was Pop Bradley, the foreman of the gas works, and his hardworking wife who always wore a blue or green wrap-over apron. They lived in the cottage adjoining the gas works which she always kept clean – a never ending job due to the proximity of the coal. They were so pleased to hear of their son George's commission in the army. They had lost one son who drowned in the sea in front of the old lifeboat station.

Fred Pope shared their pride as I heard him say: "Congratulations Pop to you and your wife for a job well done." Poor Fred was unable to father another child due to his terrible injuries sustained in 1918. Mrs Pope told me he never complained during his eight-year confinement in a wheel chair from 1918 to 1926. She sadly died aged 56 and Fred a few years later.

Mrs Eileen Gutteridge, who was very short of money due to her mortgaged home being made unliveable in by Hitler's activities, lived in a small

bungalow on the Sea Front Estate. She asked me if I would accept a pair of her husband Cliff's new issue socks. Cliff at that time was in the navy and as it was Christmas there was very little money for butcher-boys' Christmas boxes.

Although not born here but Croydon way Eileen was one of us and sadly died leaving behind her children, two lovely ladies Kay and Sandra and their ever-helpful brother John.

Also I delivered to Mr and Mrs Peter Bowers who kept a galvanised bucket upside down outside of their back door, which was usual, and a corn sack from the West of England laid across the front door in the event of wind and rain, also a common practice on Hayling. Peter came from a family whose name is now sadly gone after generations of them on Hayling Island and who were poor; but they always gave me a rock-cake. They had lost their marine son Peter on the battleship *HMS Barham* in the Mediterranean. Their daughter Sue, after serving in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force where she had seen many tragedies, worked for Mr Wilson at Stoke Fruit Farm shop as manageress. She married John Usherwood whose family home was Fareham but was born in Birmingham. All these people I knew had great respect for my parents' families.

In March 1944 a Bofor anti-aircraft gun was placed on Gutner Marsh manned by 8 to 10 men. Those I remember were: Sergeant Dave Holland from Malvern, Worcestershire, whose mother later sent him a large box of Worcester Permaine apples; as far as he was concerned they were coals from Newcastle, Corporal Gwylm Morgan from London, Gunner Woods, Gunner Macdonald from Skye who was a former merchant seaman in coasters, Charlie, 24, from Salford who was a fat man and opera singer, Joe Skillbeck from Pickering who was a despatch rider and lastly Johnnie Clark from Hull, 19, who was killed in Holland within a year of leaving Hayling Island. What a waste! We enjoyed the parties given by these men.

There was a gun emplacement at Northney. The gunners lived in a tent and a three-ton Bedford lorry towed the mobile Bofor gun to them as they were a quarter-of-a-mile away. They used our living room to write letters and also Bert and Annie Lewis' home. They were not allowed much leave. On one

occasion my brother was practising with a Sten-gun at an empty corned beef tin in a tree and he hit our uncle and aunt's bungalow. Uncle Aubrey told him to put the tin higher up or do not pull the trigger so soon. End of practise as the bullet found a lodging alongside aunt's front door!

This episode with the corned beef tin reminds me of the soldiers' cooking-oven, which was a five-gallon oil drum with a few bricks and clods of earth. Corned beef tins with the lids and bottoms taken out were joined together to make the stove pipe. Following this practice I made an oven from a forty-gallon oil drum to cook a whole pig for the Queen's Coronation Silver Jubilee celebration that was held in Avenue Road. Having over estimated the fuel it caused a great heat and set the pig alight twice, hence the charcoal covered meat was only just edible!

There were several guns in the area so the Phillips children of Northney were carted in the ration wagons to such far away places as Chidham, Thorney and Farlington Marshes; well travelled boys and girls.

A funny incident occurred when Douglas Walters, in his pick-up truck, said to the gunners in a field in West Lane: "If you boys want some new potatoes, just dig as you want." The next day Douglas, mounted on his chestnut gelding, looked into his ten-acre field and saw that two acres in the middle had no potatoes. Seageant McQuire said to me: "How dare he accuse us of purloining when he gave them permission?" Needless to say the potatoes had been consistently dug for a fortnight before but only when the darkness of the night hid their activities. The guns were moved in October.

During the whole of the war the Misses Rouse, Sybil and Josephine kept their home, Meadowsweet, as a home-from-home canteen for service men and women assisted by our own Mrs Terry, Gates, New, Prior, Daisy Bettesworth, Hilda Halliday, Hedger and others I have forgotten, all unpaid and none expected. This kindness was appreciated by an American who, after the war, sent the Sequoia Sempervirens or Redwood tree that now grows in our St Peter's churchyard. This came from Eureka, California, where he lived and a plaque was at the foot of the tree for years. This canteen was also appreciated by the gun-site girls – there are recent letters to Vic Pierce Jones about their service in the ATS at Northney.

Three days after D-Day I was out Roy Fairbrother in his boat, a 16 ft Sharpie, for which he did not have a permit, while he was on leave from the Royal Army Service Corps water transport. A small Landing Craft Assault (LCA) got stuck on the Dobbin with a falling tide running fast. Lowering our sail we rowed to the LCA having been hailed by a shell-shocked Lieutenant who asked us to row the crew to the pier. While standing on the fore deck, to hold our boat while the crew piled in, I noticed they either had no hats or their hats were askew and their faces all covered in blood. I looked in to see about 20 seamen lying at all angles on the floor of the LCA. As a 15-year-old highly emotional boy I said to Roy: 'These men are all wounded, they should be on a hospital ship.' All the men staggered, or were carried, to our boat six at a time and rowed ashore singing 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. Then we noticed the floor was covered in broken glass. The Petty Officer said the Lieutenant had broached the gin cargo for them. Roy said: "Shell-shocked – no – gin-sodden." Roy and my father said the Booth's label proclaimed the contents were of the highest quality. Several bottles were given to us by the Lieutenant and consumed in our house – the last of the smugglers. What a war! Roy was a frequent visitor to our house.

About two days before Christmas 1945 we were on our way home in father's punt at high tide when we were called to the side of a tug called *The Widgeon*. The tug was moored alongside the pier that had been erected at Wall Corner to service landing barges. Father's greeting of good morning Captain was returned with: "Sonerr the wind is increasing from the east; we have loaded four tons off this pier's decking. What is your bar like at high water as a gale will be blowing?" Father asked: "How much does she draw?" The Captain replied nine feet. Father said: "You will have to stay here over Christmas, the easterly wind will not only be rough but will also shift the sand and increase the height of the bar." The peculiar punctuation of 'sna' at the end of a sentence, and the word 'Sonerr', prompted father to ask: "You were born in Poole?" The Captain replied: "Yes, 53 years ago, where do you live, you are a Hampshire man?" Father replied there, pointing to Victoria Cottage. The Captain asked: "How does the tide run, as the wind being east and it will be snowing before nightfall I want to be home for Christmas. I do not have enough food onboard. We are working out of Portsmouth and I cannot leave

the vessel here. As you have told me the set of tide I will cast off the rest of the decking, which is larch with not a knot in it, it will wash to your garden if you want it; kindling wood for life." Father said: "I will clear the rest of the wood as there are plenty of people around here. Go now or else your keel will be left on the bar." The Captain said: "My missus will thank you. Start the motor Joe, we will lash down as we proceed." Everyone was informed around home and the wood was cleared over the following months. That was the first time I heard the Shelduck were called Burrow ducks in Poole Harbour as they always nest in rabbit holes; there were innumerable punts in Poole Harbour.

Our cousin Terence Harmer was staying over Christmas and helped us retrieve some of the planks from the pier that night. *The Widgeon* went home and the Captain was right as there was two inches of snow lying on the pier that night; the Poolies knew the weather and the sea. Some of the wood was taken to Emsworth in our boat and cut down leaving two larch planks out of each, twenty-four feet long and three-quarters of an inch thick. Dick Pope and Bonnie Middleton worked the saw. I cannot remember whether by engine or electric. A large steam engine stood idle. A lovely punt was built in the field next door, seaworthy and easy to turn, a devil to row but once moving only one side oar was rowed as she had a camber of four inches bow to stern, she served her purpose admirably. Later a larger punt gun was purchased from Messrs Spraggs at the ferry who had it mounted on one of their ferry boats to pursue duck, widgeon and Brent geese. The birds slept in large rafts or flocks in Bracklesham Bay about one mile offshore. The Spraggs were renowned fishermen who kept a lobster-pen at the ferry and lived on Hayling Island for generations. Today Admiral Trevor Spraggs lives in Sinah Lane. I believe his nephew, Richard, lives at the ferry. At all times you had to take your hat off to them for their great knowledge of the sea. In the 20s and 30s Cecil, George, Jack and, I believe, three girls were the family. Jack was Langstone Harbour Master after the war.

Mr Wakeford, Old Harry, brought to me every Sunday morning several Geographic magazines until he had exhausted his supply and I still have them as they offer the finest education in the world.

The war that had changed our world and given us so much to think about came to its close. We witnessed the return of Albie Foot, Jim Ripley, Jim Pratt, Jim Phillips and several others from the Japanese camps as well as German prisoner of war camps.

The winkle-pickers used our field to park their bicycles. Sidney Kennett, who gave me as a boy such good advice, like, 'do not dig clay with your instep as it will cause varicose veins'. This same man came from the shore and asked to use our small electric oven in the shed to dry out a package as he had fallen into a bomb crater and got it wet. He drew out from within a silk stocking a bundle of mushy pound notes from which, when dry, he counted out £80. Father asked: "Whatever are you doing carrying that fortune with you?" Sidney replied: "I am going to buy a boat tonight." The next day in came Sidney and father asked him: "Did you get the boat?" "No!" said Sidney "my tip from so-and-so never came in so the b****y bookmaker had some of the money." Father asked: "Have you got enough for the rent?" – the day being Wednesday and the rent being due the next day. "Yes" said Sidney, "Ol' Lou has a store under the lino in the bedroom."

While serving in Flanders this same Sidney, on hearing cries from the battlefield, ran and grabbed a badly wounded man and carried him 60 yards back to safety and then found out it was his brother. An award, I believe, was given for extreme bravery under fire. This story was never told by Sidney but when father questioned him he replied: "And what would you have done, sit on your b****y backside?" – all said in that lovely dialect. When Sidney died, after having fallen over the mill pond wall, there was no standing room in the church as it was full of thoughtful people who were paying their respects to Sid.

In 1945 the camps were being cleared and I found a one-gallon basket-clad stone jar of navy rum in the hedge. I suppose a transaction had taken place in the Maypole public house and the would-be receiver got there too late! It lasted us for several years. No claimant ever came forward and I have not spoken of it before; silence is golden. The rum was good and intoxicating and well worth the small effort carrying it home on my bicycle.

During the winter of 1945 father was in Langstone Harbour when he saw

sailors throwing tins of biscuits into the water from landing barges after piercing them with a pickaxe. Father asked them not to make a hole in the tins as they would then float ashore and people will eat the biscuits, dogs as well as chickens can have a feed, the tide will take them to the north shore. Dozens were retrieved in a few days. The tins were 1 foot by 1 foot 6 inches deep and contained about 7 lb or 3 kg of biscuits, very good with home made butter and jam! Which reminds me of an occasion after the war was over. My brother Derek and I went on our bicycles, each trailing a second one, to fetch two German prisoners of war who were at Denmead, which is about 10 miles from Hayling Island, to spend Christmas Day with us and then cycle back to their camp in the evening. We repeated this on Boxing Day. One was named Albert from Leipzig and the other Herbert from Westphalia. Both were 24 and had been anti-aircraft gunners but were with the Luftwaffe. In civilian life they had been plumbers.

Following on from the above occasion and many years later a lady said to me: "Your mother is a very fiery lady." I must have looked puzzled, because she told me that she had said to my mother: "You had Germans to your house, and I do NOT agree with that," whereupon my mother apparently replied: "If you can recite the Lord's Prayer to me and explain its meaning perhaps you will not be so quick to condemn me, and if you can give me the meaning other than my interpretation then I will accept what you say." This lady told me that she had great respect for my parents after that.

In March of 1946 father had a letter from Jan Falkowski saying he had bought a farm in Wickham Brook, Suffolk for £7,000 but could not understand why he now had a bill for £1,100 for live and dead stock and asked for father's help. Father went up to arbitrate on his behalf. The auctioneers would not at first accept a semi-literate brick maker without written qualifications. I am sure these words are correct and father produced a receipt from Stride's of Chichester said to ring them. His word was accepted. The farm implements were inspected and a lower price was agreed.

Next came the bull that was listed as being a four-year-old and full of what it takes to make a calf. One look and father said: "I would like to inspect the teeth of this bull to determine its age." He had already told all assembled that

the bull showed four breeds instead of the two as advertised. No pole was forthcoming so father said: "I have a pole – my arm." He then jumped the stall partition and, holding the bull's nose, opened its mouth illustrating its teeth. He then climbed back over the partition and said to Mr Lunnas the vendor: "Next time you try a trick like that on a man, who, having no country to fight for and who risked his life for you, remember there are men like me, who, having observed the size of the bull's feet knew it was nearer twelve years old. I am a country boy and I would never have tried that on anyone."

A few days later father sent three cows to the market run by the valuers. These had been valued at £40 each. Father had sought the permission of a neighbouring farmer, who had just returned from a prisoner of war camp, to use his name. He rang the auctioneers saying he had sent three of their valued cows to market and asked if they were sold. They replied that no cows from Moat Farm had been auctioned. On being told which name they had been sold under for £12, £15 and £12 they disputed ownership. Father said the cows have been sold on but I have 11 hairs from the tails of each and they will match the animals sold, not 10, not 12 but 11 hairs I have tied on the table in front of me. A trick of old Hayling cattle dealer, Jack Turner, well applied. The valuation dropped from £1,100 to £660. We were surrounded by men like Jack and his brothers, good men, real thorough and enjoyed a joke.

One very important piece of information I have not written of is, of course, church. We were sent to Sunday school from five years of age and in the summer we walked the mile across the fields and through the cow-yard at Northwood to St Peter's Institute. When we were living on the brickfield it was only half-a-mile down the road. The Sunday school teachers were Doris Cleeve, Mrs Gertrude Wilson and Mrs Nellie Clarke the vicar's wife.

Many years later Mrs Clarke was giving a talk on salt making and when I spoke of Ebenezer Cole (who died in 1933 aged 89 and was the last salt maker on Hayling and also a brick maker) and the amount of coal burnt, which is about 15 cwt per ton of salt in the final boiling, Mrs Clarke asked: "Who are you?" When I replied Noel she said: "I taught you on Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock." Then she spoke of my mother who, like her, came

from a family that had lived here for generations and said if she had imparted the Hayling knowledge to me of salt making I probably knew more than she did. This was said in front of fifty people, laughing, as she said this with good humour. A very devout Christian lady well thought of on Hayling Island.

Mrs Doris Cleeve was the granddaughter of the last miller on Hayling Island, a Mr Sparkes. She was the daughter of Flemming Barrow, a farm labourer who also ran a smallholding and was a very hard working man until having shingles when he became partially blind. She was always interesting to talk to as she knew so much of Hayling Island's history. Her lovely quiet daughter Patricia ran the Sunday school until the Vicar and the Parochial Church Council, in their wisdom and through lack of money, closed the Institute. So ended an era of 80 years of children being instructed in the rudiments of Christianity and trying to teach us the way to live.

The third teacher was Gertrude Wilson, née Dibben, another Hayling family. There is a gravestone on the south side of St Peter's church bearing the six names of her brothers and sisters who died aged between three months and six years of meningitis, scarlet fever, diphtheria and related diseases around the 1880s. She had two daughters, Nora and Marjorie. Nora married Ambrose, who between them farmed Stoke Fruit Farm. He was asked by A. H. Brown to take over his farms and to become a partner in the company afterwards. Ambrose, having survived 32 bombing missions over Germany, undertook this enormous task as the farms extended to 500 acres against his of 30. He worked, as we say, night and day running it with the help of his hard working wife and I have seen sparks from welding equipment at 1.30 in the morning while he was mending and making machinery. A quiet man who was not given to talking much but every word was very meaningful, well-thought out and spoken. He was not a church goer but he attended funerals of village people showing his respect for his fellow men.

I write now of him and his wife's great kindness to myself, my wife and son. My son, courting a nice little girl, wanted a house to live in. One of the farm bungalows became vacant. We approached Mr and Mrs Wilson with a view to renting it for our son. They were not looking to rent it out again but agreed to sell the bungalow at a very agreeable figure. My wife Valerie and I were

overjoyed that our eldest son would have a home of his own before marriage and also he would be living next door to such a lovely hard-working couple who would act as an example to our son in all ways, these being our friends Barbara and Ray Hawker, real Hayling Islanders and exceptional people.

I now know of many more secrets kept of their kindness to our village inhabitants. Their children, Mary, in her quiet way with a sincere husband to support her, and Simon and his wife, Ross, all still support our village with many acts of thoughtfulness instilled by their parents. Simon worked so hard supporting our lifeboat, himself a member of the crew on many courageous rescues. Of them I shall say no more as I think my thanks are recorded.

At the beginning of 1946, when at a dance in St Peter's Institute, I met a lovely little girl called Valerie who I married on 4 April 1953 – my friend and helpmate now for nearly 59 years; 66 if we count courting days. Her finest achievement – our two sons. When she reached forty-years-of-age I cut the brick making machine down to make 480 bricks per hour from 600 as I wrongly thought she was old. This was after we, with other's help, had built our home. My cousin-in-law John Smith did all the plumbing and asked for no payment, typical of John who was born in Portsmouth.

In the 20s and early 30s father and his brothers, with at times others, used a 75 fathom seine net for catching mackerel in the daylight and bass and mullet in the night, also skate, sole, plaice, turbot, brill, flounders, gurnard, herring, shad, lobsters and crab by this method; occasionally in October we caught cod. Bass were caught in daylight when the sun was shining on the water. In the morning between 9 and 11 was a good time behind the Winner in 5–6 feet of water. Fish weighing up to 3 lb were caught using the dosh method in which you dropped a buoy on the end of the net, which had a staff or pole about 3 ft long holding the net apart. In south Wales river estuaries the staff was 9 ft long. The professional men used a basket as a buoy, you then pulled against the tide as fish swim against it for 50 yards or so, then at right angles about 40 yards, then parallel back to pick up the marker buoy. The Coles, Atkins and Moores, fishermen from Milton, were dab hands at this method of getting a catch. This was more commonly known as tuck-netting.

Mackerel were another fish caught in their thousands, mainly in Hayling Bay.

We waited perhaps 3–4 hours watching the sea for signs of the fish. One sign was a white patch on the water, which was oil from the excreta of white bait, and another was gulls flying over the area as the fish headed for the beach. When about 100 yards from the shore and the fish settled, the cry of ‘now or never’ was heard and pulling on four or six oars the boat fairly leapt out of the water. One man was left on the beach holding the end of the shoreline, this being a one-and-a-quarter inch hemp rope or the more favoured one-and-a-half-inch coir rope as this floated. The boat was rowed out level with the fish and the net dropped. The man on shore started pulling with help from shore walkers or bathers, very slowly, plenty of time, as the mackerel were feeding on the whitebait bunched and circling, meanwhile the boat being rowed as only desperate men can row; a pleasure to watch. No place for novices. The net was carried in a straight line and turning towards the shore with about 20 yards left on the boat so that when reaching the shore the ends of the net were level and then pulled in on the beach. Sometimes a sea trout or salmon would be amongst the catch to give an added bonus – all great fun for everyone taking part. In 1930 Mrs May Mathews of Midhurst, when working at Green’s Café on Hayling Beach, helped pull in nets holding 34,000 mackerel.

During the war my father and uncles and us children rowed and sailed in a 16 ft Bosham fishing boat using a 12 ft beam trawl fishing net. In this we waited until the tide had run out two-and-a-half hours. We then went to the Emsworth Channel opposite Mill Rytte where we would drop the trawl and brace the towing warp around a throle pin on the quarter of the boat, there were holes in the gunwale for these to go, then drifting, rowing or sailing with the tide for two heaves. A heave was the time trawled on the bottom then heaved up, then through the hole about 70 yards to the east of Hayling Island Sailing Club, a short heave as there was wreckage on the bottom and the tide running fast. Here we would pick up whiting and crabs, sole, plaice, skate, ling, conger, turbot and brill, the largest being: turbot 15 lb, brill 2 lb, sole 3½ lb and plaice 4 lb. Lobsters were caught on the first of the flood, never on the ebb, the largest caught being 10½ lb, (I have his claw shell).

We also trawled for prawns ‘under’ the mud or close to the bank, ‘under’ being an expression. ‘Petering’, another way to catch flatfish, was to have a

deep net, say 24 ft, and lay the net when the tide is coming in so that 10 ft of the net is laid on the bottom forming a bag on which the fish lay. About an hour later we went down tide and beat the water. We then picked up the lead line leaving the net floating and pulling both ends with a rope from each end of the lead lines these having been fixed to an anchor with a buoy or basket. Again, Milton fishermen did this in Langstone Harbour and Hayling Bay as well as those from Emsworth and Bosham. The Treagusts of Emsworth caught a lot of fish this way. I have watched some and taken part in many ways of fishing, catches being photographed at times.

Please bear in mind our working day in the summer was from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 6 a.m. until 12 dinner time, Sundays were used to dry the bricks as we made them. So we never had a lot of time; only weekends, Saturday night and Sunday morning on neap tides so not every week. All these things we children took an active part in. Father, my uncles, cousins and we children only fished for pleasure as nearly all we caught was given away to friends and relations, which was a very welcome addition to rations during war time. The autumn was the time to trawl night times on spring tides. As the tides ran out fast we rowed or sailed the boat back up channel close to the western mudflats where there was a back eddy. We could not row against the tide in the harbour mouth south east of the Hayling Island Sailing Club so we tied a warp on the side of the boat three feet from the bow and held this while we walked along on the shore, this we called sheering. Two of us pulling could walk quite fast. With our 'iron topsail' or outboard motor years later we could just beat the tide.

Other recollections of the War.

Pillboxes were built all around the island of which several still stand. Barbed wire and Mills scaffolding was erected all along the beach as a barricade about ten feet tall. Pieces of railway line were bolted and welded together like stars and laid on Pilsey Island. Scaffolding was erected all across the Winner Bank, a lorry chassis used to carry this remained on the mussel bank all through the war and lobsters got underneath this, we caught several.

Iron work was carried from Emsworth in the barges *Langstone* of Langstone and *Recoil* of Emsworth. They also carried scaffolding for the landing light

towers that were put up on Pilsey Island. The Treagusts in their fishing boat *Pamela* ran the cables to these at high water and maintained them. Father shot cormorants off these towers in the night for which the War Agriculture paid him six pence each.

A Walrus amphibious plane used to land in Emsworth Channel quite close to us whilst fishing. A Catalina flying boat was moored on the north of Hayling Island Sailing Club, one of her floats leaked so she had a permanent list; she was later towed to Calshot. The ever present worrying about serving armed forces and prisoners of war was shared by their families with my mother and father as was the visits of men and boys on leave. The Jordan boys, Peter and Alec, when on leave brought Alec's fiancée Sadie from Scotland and took her fishing; she was sick all day but insisted the boys enjoyed their day out. Sadie of course married Alec and kept him in Scotland. Both these boys died before they were 70. In May of 1944 a mock invasion was carried out when men of the First Canadian Division landed on the beach off Bound Lane. They then marched to Stansted Park and camped until D-Day when, I believe, they were some of the first ashore at Juno Beach, Normandy. Mr Chilton of Angmering was one of these and a very interesting man to talk to.

Other English regiments camped all over Hayling Island, some in Woodgaston for about two weeks. I have signed photos of two officers who slept in our house during this time, one a Major and the other a Lieutenant, as they would have slept in small bivouacs otherwise. The soldiers dug a large latrine hole in Lama Field 200 yards from our house and when they left they threw into it corned beef emergency rations and odd scraps etc. The rations were like oatmeal biscuits, which when boiled in water made porridge.

At various times guards were placed in different areas, a naval one was at Gable Head where Smith & Austin now stands and the Home Guard were on the bridge at night and at Eastoke Point. They had a rifle mortar and grenade practice ground in Tournurbury. Mr Earney, our schoolmaster, was an officer in the Home Guard. Major Norwood was in charge of men who did not get much sleep for three nights of the week and many also worked ten to twelve hours a day. Their deeds are really overlooked.

In the bad raids our fire service was sent to Southampton and Portsmouth, but was nearly helpless to stop the raging fires. Local men manned a fireboat at the ferry. The war brought land girls to Hayling Island, two of them, May and Olive, married local brothers Ralph and Bert Edney. Both are members of our community and it is a privilege to know them.

Many of our services were cut off due to the bombing but not for long. They were soon repaired by men who also served part time in the Civil Defence, Red Cross and Home Guard or as Fire Watchers, Air Raid Wardens and Special Constables. Also in the Special Explosive Group, who were described as expendable recently. Savings weeks were held like 'Wings for Victory'. Teenagers joined pre-service training units. Our clergymen were recruited from service establishments like the Revd Noakes, he preached a sermon in St Peter's once to five people who included two choristers and the organist. ATS, Wrens, sailors and soldiers also attended services, St Mary's had church parades of sailors and Wrens. The church bells were not rung until 8 May 1945, V-E Day.

Several local girls worked in the NAAFI and others in the shipyard building landing barges and many joined the services. Others joined the Women's Land Army and every type of what were men's jobs before the war. I joined the Sea Cadets who provided a lot of activities, one being a trip on the trials of a motor torpedo boat from Littlehampton, all train tickets provided. This was my only experience of seasickness.

Near to the end of the war a plane towing a target, which was shot at by the guns at Eastney, flew too low and crashed just off the beach but the two airmen survived. Father once found one of the bright red targets and made a sail for his boat from it.

To sum the war up – there was never a dull moment. For many of course there was all of the worry and sadness, which everyone shared as we were all in it together. I now realise that I was in the midst of many brave mothers and wives. The war brought many men who married local girls and they have all fitted in making life go with a swing, also local men brought their brides here to live and work.

And so I could go on writing but, like life, I must end this part of my book

with the great tragedy that overcame us. On 10 September 1949 my brother, Derek, sailing his boat *Thelma* to Le Havre with our cousin Terry Harmer, did not arrive in Le Havre. Neither they nor any part of the *Thelma* were ever found in the English Channel. Dad had purchased the *Thelma* from Frank Longland of Langstone in 1947 with bricks and so many of us in the village had had such great pleasure in it.

Terry's father, Jack Harmer, was a friend of my father and uncles and before marrying their sister, May Pycroft, served in the Battle of Jutland at the age of 14. Later in the war he was the last man off *HMS Manchester* having been trapped in the shell room. He narrowly escaped capture by the Italians by hiding behind floating wreckage and was in the water for two hours before being picked up by the Dutch-owned hospital ship *Oranje*.

Our lives were shattered, as were the lives of people in the village as well as Terry's parents and brother, Jack and May Harmer and Donald and all of our other relatives. Father never recovered and mother never spoke of Derek until 1997 – her untold grief hidden. This was only to be made worse by the death of Basil, my eldest brother, on 21 January 1953 who fell out of a tree at Havant while lopping it three days before. Sister Bacon of Laphorn Ward said: 'God has been kind here today – he would have been a hopeless cripple for the rest of his life.'

So ends part of Victoria Cottage's story on a tragic note, otherwise so happy, as Mrs Windebank said of the area – 'Paradise'.

The Sinah Gun Site



Sinah Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery. (*The News.*)

Built in 1940, the camp formed part of the extensive defences against German air attack on Portsmouth during World War 2.

The site consisted of four gun emplacements armed with 4.5 inch naval guns. Close by were accommodation buildings, ammunition stores and the command and control buildings. At first it was manned by Royal Artillery Gunners of 219 battery (57th Heavy Anti-Aircraft regiment) then later by men of the 368 and 16 Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery.

Hayling Island and Langstone acted as an elaborate decoy to protect Portsmouth. Structures in Special Fire sites were filled with oil and then set alight, to trick the bomber pilots into thinking that Langstone Harbour was the Dockyard.

During the night of 17th & 18th April 1941 German bombers targeted Portsmouth. The decoys were employed and they worked. Unfortunately the Sinah Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery received a direct hit, resulting in fatalities

and injuries to men of 219 battery. All of the buildings were either destroyed or damaged and the site remained out of action until December 1941.

A plaque commemorating Royal Artillery Gunners James Bardoe, James Collingbine, Arthur Farmer, Reginald Knight, James Powell, and Leonard Ward, who died that night, hangs in one of the remaining emplacements.

Today the site is a scheduled Ancient Monument, one of the best preserved of its kind. It is part owned by Havant Borough Council and Hayling Golf Club. In 2008 English Heritage undertook a major project with funding from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund to stabilise the emplacement next to Sinah Lake thus helping to preserve the monument for future generations.

See also: [www BBC](http://www.BBC.com) - WW2 People's War - The bombing of Sinah Battery.

The Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.) on Sinah Warren 1942-43

Memories by Hazel Gould (née Plumbly), 22 November 2013



Joan Reid, self and Gladys Mallow on Hayling Island beach by the Golf Club, August 1942.

I volunteered to join the A.T.S. in March 1942 and after 3 weeks initial training in Honiton, 6 weeks training on Radar equipment in Devizes and

further training at a Firing Camp in Bude, I was posted to Hayling Island to join the 458 [M] Heavy Ack Ack (A.A.) Regiment as a Radar Operator or as we were known initially "G.L. Girls!" (Gun Layers). Half of the Regiment were on Sinah Warren and half were in Northney. This was one of the early mixed A.A. Regiments to have been formed – with A.T.S. girls manning the Radar, also the Predictor and Height & Range Finder, as well as Cooks and Orderlies.

The Radar Girls were billeted in Nissen Huts in Ferry Road opposite the camp. Our beds were pretty hard and consisted of a main frame with 3 "biscuits" [little mattresses], 3 hairy blankets, 2 sheets and pillow. Shared ablutions were available within the Nissen Hut with a bath that you had to put your name down for! Meals were served in the Mess on the Main Site.

The G.L. girls were in teams of 6 on each shift and the Radar sets were manned 24 hours, each shift being from 7am to 3pm, 3pm to 11pm and 11pm to 7am. At this time the Radar set was a Mark II – consisting of a Transmitter, Receiver and a Power Unit – four girls in the Receiver and two in the Transmitter. The girls who worked in the Transmitter were also responsible for starting up the Power Unit – not an easy task on a cold winter's night – as we had to swing a heavy wooden handle to get the thing going!! Sometimes at night, the Prowler Guard was around to help when they were in difficulties! When on duty we were based in a Manning Hut and the Team had to carry out maintenance on the sets – climbing up the ladder on top of the Receiver to clean the dipoles – also maintaining the Power Unit with N160 oil in the sump and the rocker boxes and generally keeping everything clean and maintained, ready for action.

When "Action Stations" were called and the site fully manned, the information from the Radar was sent to the Predictor which gave the guns the position for firing.

There were many exercises, day and night, when everyone was on site, to keep us on our toes!! The Radar was "ON WATCH" at various times during the day and night – searching the skies for enemy aircraft and from time to time picking up our bombers coming back from a raid; we were able to identify these by an I.F.F. (Identification, Friend or Foe) signal which would appear on a small cathode ray tube above the No. 1 position in the Receiver

cabin. A Non-Commissioned-Officer was in charge and passed all the information to the Command Post by telephone. In the Receiver there were 3 Cathode Ray Tubes each one operated by a member of the team, showing the Range, Bearing and Height of the incoming aircraft. During the Dieppe raid the whole site was manned 24 hours a day for 5 days continuously.

When off duty and on site, there were lectures on Aircraft Recognition and other subjects also visits by the Padre. When completely off duty and with a pass, once a week, we could take the "Puffing Billy" to Havant, or go down to the Ferry to cross over and catch the bus to Portsmouth. Sometimes we would just walk down to our local pub "The Shades" for a drink or "The Barley Mow" which then was a small country pub where we played darts and shove ha'penny. The one shop was called "Clapps" where you could buy small items.

During the summer we were allowed to walk down to the beach by the Golf Club. There were dances in the N.A.A.F.I. (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) from time to time when the local sailors were able to attend along with troops from the Special Boat Squadron at Nabs Head.

In September 1943 I was promoted and posted to Liverpool Docks and another Regiment -so what transpired on Hayling Island after that I have no knowledge.

However, I have always felt that insufficient acknowledgement was given to all the girls of the A.T.S. who served on Gun Sites during the war, as after all, for a while, we were the FRONTLINE IN DEFENCE OF THE REALM!!!

Now it Can be Told - Top Secret at the Gun Site

Vic Pierce Jones

The COPPS (Combined Operations units) now commemorated on Hayling Seafront, were not the Island's only contribution to success on D Day. The late Fred Ryder, who was for some time Battery Quartermaster Sergeant at the Gun Site (opposite Sinah Warren) used to tell an amusing but revealing story of those times. One day a panicky young officer appeared at the Gun Site office, now a residence in Sinah Lane, demanding to borrow the unit's Matador lorry. These were standard army vehicles for transporting men and

materials. The Matador was similar in size to the Champion ("Champ") but had the advantage of a tow bar at the rear making it ideal for towing, in their case the Gun Site's 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns, which were mounted on wheels.

The officers' request was turned down at once, seen as a "damned cheek". No unit worth its while would have risked lending such useful equipment to any one without special permission from higher up. What made it worse was that the officer wouldn't say what he wanted to use the Matador for, only saying it was Top Secret. Eventually after a lot of phone calls and arguments permission was given for a few hours only. Fearfully the Hayling Gunners watched their Matador disappear towards the Ferry. A few hours later it was returned.

Unfortunately a few days later the officer reappeared, still panicky, asking for it to be loaned again. He still would not let them know what for. This time the Gunners were prepared. They detailed a discrete observation group to slip down to the Ferry to see what was going on. What they saw explained every thing. Half way across Langstone Harbour mouth a tank was stuck in the mud. Once again ropes and chains were slung from the Matador and the tank restored to dry land, though a somewhat undignified recovery it had to be said.

It is quite likely that this indeed was a Top Secret effort to get amphibious tanks able to support the infantry on the D-Day landings. Probably the trials were the brain child of one of Hayling's residents of those days, author and aeroplane manufacturer Neville Shute (Norway.) He had come to live at Pond Head when his home in Southsea became vulnerable to bombing. Whilst here he conducted secret projects on the shore line of Pond Head and elsewhere on Hayling the experiments at the mouth of Langstone Harbour being the most important. Though the ones needing to be cleared up by the Matadors were failures others did succeed and British troops did get tank support on D-Day using floatation buoyancy of one sort or another. In this they were luckier than their American allies who had no tank support e.g. at their landings on Omaha beach which suffered heavy casualties.

Fred Ryder described how he came to the Hayling Gun Site with an advance party of Gunners about Christmas 1941. They found the site still deserted

and damaged after a heavy attack by parachute bombs which drifted onto Hayling from seawards on 17/18th April of that year. Six men were killed and their names are honoured at one of the gun pits today. One of these bombs dangled for hours from a tree at the junction of Sinah Lane and Park Road, forcing West Town residents to divert to Beachlands if they wanted to get to Mengham.

On his first night at the site Fred described exploring the area walking along the dark and deserted road when suddenly there was an enormous bang. No bombs this time. It was caused by a relief valve in the sewage system of those days. For Islanders a bigger threat came down the road at the junction of Staunton Avenue and the Sea Front. A clutch of incendiary bombs released by the Luftwaffe intended to scatter on their way down, actually failed to be released and there was a huge conflagration where today there is nothing but peace, calm and blackberry bushes.

Later on Fred's biggest surprise came when he happened to be taking a shower at the office HQ. To his alarm he heard the voices of young ladies downstairs. He struggled to make himself presentable and found they were the first draught of ATS to man the unit. They soon came to play their part in the war effort, using apparatus for range and direction finding to guide the guns. It was stoutly denied they ever fired any of the guns. One ATS girl is believed to have been killed. A mystery from those days was that when one of the defensive pill boxes was cleared up after the war clothes and other personal items revealed that someone had been living there incognito. Actually one family did take to a pill box near Sinah during night time raids and at least one Islander was born there. When Fred's unit left Hayling they joined the Eighth Army in the Mediterranean.

D-Day on Hayling

Vic Pierce Jones

Leading Wren, Sheila Troke, née, Lauchlan, spent the night before D-Day 1944 on duty in her office on the south-east corner of the first floor of the Royal Hotel, on Hayling sea front. She was a Signals Distribution Wren but a period of silence had been ordered. This meant no wireless messages, no

outside phone messages, no morse or flash signals. So she had nothing to do all night. There was a noise outside so she turned the lights off, took the blackout down and looked out. What she saw was history being made in the sea off Hayling. One window faced east over the funfair, but the main window looked south across Beachlands towards the sea. She saw hundreds of boats passing Hayling on the way to the invasion beaches of Normandy. "I've never seen anything like it before or since," says Sheila. But her main impression was the noise of all the engines. "It was tremendous!" says Sheila. There was a phone line to the "Wrennery" in the Victoria Hotel, on the corner of Beach Road and Westfield Avenue, now the site of part of Mark Anthony Court. Her friend Peggy was taking time off there and Sheila reported what she could see. Most of the young men they had mixed with on Hayling were on those boats and had gone. Few came back. The next day Hayling seemed deserted. It was quite eerie. So Sheila and Peggy spent the day playing tennis in the garden of 2 Staunton Avenue.

For months Sheila had been working at HMS Dragonfly, established at the Royal in June 1943. It was a Combined Operations "Suspense Base", for holding and training servicemen preparing for the invasion. Further down the seafront Suntrap School, now converted into luxury apartments, was their medical centre and dental surgery. Sheila specially remembers the kindness of a Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurse who attended the sick bay there. After the war she became an air hostess but was killed in a crash. Next door to the Royal Hotel, the Norfolk Crescent was packed with tough Canadian troops, who were "very wild" and wrecked the place. Says Sheila "the whole Island was packed with so many thousands of soldiers you'd think it would sink!"

Dragonfly looked after the invasion barges moored round the coast, especially in Langstone harbour. They weren't the very large craft such as landed troops for the assault but smaller vessels which ferried men and equipment to and from bigger ships out to sea. They were big enough to carry maybe two tanks or cars plus about a dozen men. In Langstone harbour they had practised going backwards and forwards, again and again, to get the manoeuvres correct. The skippers of these boats were very young and inexperienced. Sheila remembers how one Midshipman, aged only about

seventeen, took out a landing craft with the ramp still down. It sank at once and had to be recovered at low tide.

In those days Sheila was an eighteen-year old Wren, as the Woman's Royal Naval Service was known. She was one of eight STOs, switchboard officers, and eight SDOs, signal distribution officers. The main switchboard was in a concrete bunker in the garden of a house named Brooklyn, on the south corner of Bacon Lane and Beach Road. They were guarded by a steel-helmeted sentry with rifle and bayonet at the ready. They worked shifts of eight hours on, twelve off, on a three or four day rota. At nights they worked from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. and got 36 hours off, unless one of the other girls reported sick and someone had to stand in for her. The bunker was dismantled in 1945 and there are no signs of it today.

When off duty they slept eight to a room in a house in Bacon Lane, named Goldersley. There were only two other houses in Bacon Lane in those days. They were catered for in the "Wrennery". Security everywhere was very tight. One evening she was walking on the beach with new, squeaky shoes and she was told if she couldn't be quiet she would have to walk in the sea to stop the noise. She remembers being frightened when they were stopped by a sentry who pointed a rifle and bayonet at their chests. He ordered them to approach one by one to show their passes. Security was especially tight towards Eastoke and no one was permitted on Sandy Point. The COPPs (Combined Operations Pilotage Pioneers) were stationed at the Sailing Club. At night they used to see their "fast, little motor boats" speeding across the Channel to survey the beaches for the D-Day landings.

Sheila is positive that Churchill and Eisenhower visited Hayling beach at least once, probably twice, but she can't remember anything about General Montgomery being there. Despite stories to the contrary, she says that none of these wartime leaders actually visited the Royal Hotel or stood on the balcony to watch the practice landings as is said. But "Winnie" and "Ike" did walk quite a way along the sand towards the sand dunes at Gunner Point,

Havant Borough History Booklets



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Compiled by Ralph Cousins

ralph.cousins@btinternet.com

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studying the terrain carefully, because Hayling beach was similar to the beaches planned for the D-Day landings. Exactly a month before D-Day they watched the practice landings known as Operation Fabius. The troops selected for the first wave of the assault on June 6th were taken round the Isle of Wight from Gosport and practised landing on Hayling Beachlands. Nobody was actually allowed to watch them and Islanders were told to keep their curtains drawn

Sheila's friend, Peggy, had a boyfriend, Gerry Cole, who was Company Sergeant Major of the Royal Marines. He was a very smart man, six foot four inches tall with beautifully polished boots. He went with the invasion fleet on D-Day. When he came back he was literally on his knees with fatigue and shock. He said the noise alone of the guns and bombs on the invasion beaches was "absolutely shattering." Said Sheila, "We had to carry him to bed."

Sheila was full of praise for the Ack-Ack (anti-aircraft) Gunners at Sinah gun site. "They were crack shots and hit many enemy planes." Sheila's fiancé, Alick Troke, was a Sick Bay Chief Petty Officer whose post was in a bungalow named Rinkaby, on the north corner of Staunton Avenue and St Helen's Road. The doctor's surgery was on the left of the front door and Alick's clinic and dispensary were on the right side. One day a stray land mine, probably jettisoned by a fleeing enemy bomber, fell somewhere between the bungalow and Station Road, causing huge damage. The wall of the dispensary was wrecked and all his bottles of medicines and pills were smashed and thrown around. He swept them up with the rest of the debris and threw them all away. "What else can I do?" he said.

One of his jobs was to distribute the First Aid boxes to the invasion barges before they left. They each included a small bottle of medicinal brandy but these had a habit of disappearing. So he took them out and when he delivered the boxes to the skippers of the barges he handed them the brandy separately. He said: "What harm could they do? They were small bottles and most of the skippers were very young."

"Hayling in those days was quite different to now," says Sheila. "It was really just country with two or three villages. Beach Road has changed beyond recognition. It used to be all houses with really beautiful gardens." For

entertainment they used to have camp dances, concerts and “sixpenny hop” dances. Occasionally professional entertainers came down in the official company known as ENSA. One famous personality was a singer, Anne Shelton. “But the officers ‘pinched’ her and entertained her in the ward room.” The Wrens used to go often to the Regal Cinema in Mengham. “But it was full of fleas and they had a job to get rid of them for days afterwards.” Their favourite pubs were the Royal Shades and the West Town Hotel. Sometimes in the evening they would stroll down Hollow Lane to the Mengham fish and chip shop, but it was usually only for chips or potato cakes, fish was rare.

Dragonfly shut down on 15th January 1946. Sheila married Alick and they stayed on Hayling for some time after the war. For a while they lived in the basement of a hotel, which was then situated at the east end of the Crescent. It was considered a very good address with its fabulous views. Then she lived down the Ferry Road before moving to Malta, then returning to England and a house in Cowplain. Alick always wanted to return to living on Hayling but sadly he passed away.

Sheila served as a Liberal Democrat Councillor on Havant Borough Council, representing Hart Plain Ward.

My Wartime Memories on Hayling Island

John Rogers

These notes were originally made with my family in mind, and therefore not necessarily in any specific order. Please keep this in mind when reading. My wife and I decided not to alter them in the way that would detract my feelings and lose the atmosphere of the war as I remember them.

The day war was declared I was sitting looking out of the front window in the bungalow when the Prime Minister on the radio announced that we were at war with Germany. I was looking at the field opposite and immediately imagined rows of cannon at each end shooting at each other. The reality turned out to be rather different.

Although I was not aware of it life was to change for all of us in our sleepy

Island. It didn't happen quickly it was all rather slow with at first. Just before war was declared the Family went down to a hut at Gable Head, roughly where the electrical transformer is now, to receive our gas masks together with instruction on how to use it. After we had it issued we had to carry it around with us where ever we went, and could be pulled up by a policeman if caught without it slung over the shoulder, it was housed in a cardboard box with a shoulder strap. The authorities were concerned that the Germans would mount a gas attack from the air, as depicted by H. G. Wells in his book *Things to Come*.

My sister and I went to a private school next door to my grandfather's house, it was in what I thought was a very large shed painted green, with some fir trees between it and the road, (it was sited on the ground that I later built our first married home) and was run by a Mrs Crees. I stayed there until a bomb landed just in front of it in 1940, It was quite a good school, as I learnt all my times tables and could do double multiplication before I left, when I was nearly 7. Rather than go to the outside toilet behind Mrs Creases house, my mother told me to run home to our own. Its just one of those early memories that stick in my mind.

The first real memory of war was the German aircraft flying over with anti-aircraft artillery shells exploding around them. It happened at our friends Mr and Mrs Hunt and their children Diana and John at Grassmere, Hollow Lane, it was in their back garden that a piece of shrapnel nearly hit my head. It was after watching a group of Germans flying over with the shells bursting all round them, I heard a sort of whine, this whine grew louder coming right over my head and thumping into the ground about two feet from me. I picked it up and took it home in a bit of tissue paper, but it was later it was claimed back by Mrs Hunt who thought they had a more valid claim on it, so back it went and I didn't see it again.

Before all this happened my father and grandfather dug a large hole in the bungalow's back garden, assembled an issue Anderson Air Raid Shelter in it and covered the whole thing with earth. My mother, father sister and I spent many a winter night during 1940 and 41, with the bombs falling round us in the damp and cold.

We wore Siren Suits in the shelter; these were like boiler overalls made of a thick insulating material. (Mr Churchill wore one when he did a walk around during the London Blitz) and slept on bunk beds with wooden planks, on the floor, underneath the planks a sump was dug, it was always filling with water which had to be bailed out. We didn't wait for the air raid warning to go before we took shelter, but were put to bed as if it were the normal thing to do. It was quite an adventure for us children, but you can imagine how deadly serious it must have been to my parents to even contemplate butting their children to bed in the garden night after night.

The first two bombs to be dropped on Hayling arrived one night during the summer of 1940. My parents, sister and the Powell family all trooped to see one of the craters which was in the field to the north and east of the Pound, one the public path that comes out on the Havant Road at the Maypole Public House, it was about one hundred and fifty metres north of the Pound. The other of the bombs landed in Pound Marsh, just outside the school playing field. That crater was not filled in until well after the end of the war. My sister Pat and some other friends often went there to collect the tadpoles. It was a wonderful place for us children, surrounded by blackberries and gorse; we would spend all morning or afternoon there and have a wonderful time.

Shortly after the first bomb landed a friend of mine a girl called Mary Elizabeth Spencer, 8, of my own age was killed in her home, it was in Elm Grove, it was day time and she was under a table, the bomb landed in front of the building, the table collapsed on her I remember before the war going to have an evening meal with her family, it was dark and my father bought both Pat and me a battery torch to use when we walked round to see them.

My memory about the next point is a bit hazy as to when it happened but my mother and father thought it too dangerous to stay in Hayling, and decided to take the family up to my mother's sister Aunt May and Uncle Wilfred's at 12 Clarendon Road, Mitcham, South London. We travelled by train on the Victoria line, and as we approached the London suburbs the train was stopped as an air raid was in progress. Nothing happened and we eventually arrived at Croydon railway station.

We stayed at Mitcham for six weeks, until Hitler switched the air raids to

London. My Aunt and Uncle did not have an air raid shelter so we were in bed when the German Air Force raided London at night for the first time, my parents got us out of bed to see the resulting red glow from the fires, we stood out in the road looking at the reflection in the clouds above the roofs of the houses opposite. The next day my mother wanted to see the results of the raid, so we went into London City. When we arrived the damage was such that my mother could not recognise the roads that had been so familiar to her when she worked there, and was very upset. We went into St Paul's Cathedral, a bomb had penetrated the roof and there was a crater on the floor, there didn't seem to me to be any other damage, but I was very young and would not have realised what was about me. So we all went home to Hayling as London was obviously getting more dangerous than my parents had anticipated.

Within a very short time bombs were falling in all parts of the island. Hayling was a similar shape to Portsmouth when viewed from the air and the authorities placed decoy fires in Langstone Harbour just off of the north shore. It must have been only a couple of months after the shrapnel incident that when we were bombed out. We were all in the air-raid shelter when we were woken up with a large thump on the earth roof; it was a water tank landing after it had been blown through the air by the explosion. My Grandfather's house was damaged beyond repair, together with the adjoining house, and Mr Crees's house and the school. The bomb had landed right in front of the school with the crater partly in the road. All the services were broken, and shortly after my sister Pat contracted a skin disease which covered all her body with sores that continually oozed pus. It took weeks to heal and was very painful. Every day she had the nurse in to peel her night dress off of these sores with the aid of water so they could be cleaned and ointment applied, I can still remember her screams of protest.

It was about this time that Diana Hunt died of pneumonia, she had been very ill for a couple of weeks and was inside the house, there was a very bad air raid during the night, her parents decided it was best to carry her into their shelter. She died that night. Before the bomb had dropped my parents had decided that Pat and I should be going to the council school. The destruction of the school made that decision final.

So we both changed schools and went to Mill Rythe Primary school. My sheltered early childhood had finished. I was put in the upper-infants, the teacher was Miss Linington, all the class were scared of her. One of the lessons was a joint one with the lower-infants listening to a BBC schools' wireless programme. Miss Linington would be behind the class with the other teacher asking questions, and if, as with me, the answer was not quick enough there was a prod in the back. I was pleased to get to Easter when we all went up to standard one.

At first Pat and I were very shy. We went home to dinner and always arrived back at school with about twenty minutes to go before the dinner break was over. We both stood under a tree not playing with anyone as we did not have any friends. I do not know how long this went on for, but we both eventually made friends and started to play as all children normally do. I think the teachers name was Mrs James, she was much better and I started to learn again. As I have already said I had mastered double multiplication at my first school, so when I was taught the times tables again together with double multiplication, I picked it all up again very quickly.

We had many air-raids during school time over the next few years, we all had to troop out to the shelters in an orderly file and wait for the all clear and then troop back to the class room. Luckily the school was not bombed and no child was ever killed whilst at the school. That was not true at night; one of my class friends was killed. The week before it happened he, his brother and myself were playing on the bomb site of my grandfather's house. By this time we had discarded the Anderson shelter and now had a Morrison shelter. This consisted of a steel frame rather like a large table with a steel top, it was put in Pat's room and she slept on top of it, we didn't get into it until the siren went, then we all laid down under this structure, it was like a large bed and just managed to accommodate two adults and two children under the bedclothes.

We were all in this shelter when a lone plane droned overhead, the familiar scream of falling bombs made us all cringe, they were really very loud, there were three enormous explosions (we were told that if you could hear the bang the bomb was too far off to hurt you, from my experience I think it was

a fair statement). Apparently my friend and his brother were in an Anderson shelter: their parents were still in the house. The bomb landed directly on the shelter, and all that was left was a hole in the ground. The house was at the north end of Manor Road. It has since been rebuilt, and I often wonder if the present owners realise what had happened to their property during the war.

My father was employed as a Civil Servant in the Inland Revenue, this was a protected occupation, he applied to join the Royal Air Force but was refused. The Government thought it more important for him to collect money for the war effort than to join the armed services. So instead he joined the Home Guard, was eventually issued with a .303 rifle and five rounds of ammunition. He used to let me play with it, giving me dummy rounds to fire, I aimed it at trees in the field behind our garden and imagine there were Germans attacking the house. Later he was issued with an American automatic rifle, and I played with that also.

My father's office was on the corner of Union St. and Commercial Road in Portsmouth, when Portsmouth became the nightly target for the bombers he had to do fire watch duties at the office. The duties consisted of manning the roof waiting for incendiary bombs to drop so that they could be quickly extinguished so he was obliged to do night duties at the office and also night duties at a pillbox on Hayling seafront off of Southwood Road. Later he was transferred to one on the north side of Mengham Creek on the sea wall about two hundred metres east of the old brickyard site. He would lay snares to trap rabbits, inspecting them in the morning on his way home to see if any had caught. I don't remember him being very successful, but there was the occasional time when we had free fresh red meat to supplement the meat ration. In those days I liked rabbit, but I'm afraid I have lost the taste for it now.

Sometime during 1942 or 1943 a landmine was dropped just to the west of the pillbox the man on duty thought it was a German pilot parachuting from his plane after being shot down. He was lucky to live as it exploded when it hit the mud, he had realised just in time that it was a land mine and had thrown himself to the ground just before it went off a second one landed a few feet away but did not explode.

Hayling Island before the war had three holiday camps; Northney, the name tells its situation, Sunshine Holiday Camp, which is now called Mill Rythe Holiday Village which is behind the Mill Rythe School, and Coronation Holiday Camp which was down the east end of Fishery Lane. They were all taken over during the war by the services together; Northney I'm not sure by which one, the Sunshine by the Army and Coronation by the Navy. A great number of large private houses were also taken over, so with the Navy Dockyard. Thorney Island and all the requisitioned properties on Hayling, from the age of six to twelve I became very used to the armed services being around.

Soon after France was over-run, the beach was prohibited to all civilians, and had defences from invasion built very quickly. From the sand going inland the defences were; about six pillboxes in the slope of shingle facing the sea (these have all in turn been covered with shingle and then destroyed by the advancing sea); about fifty metres back just in front of the grass common, scaffolding about three metres high was erected and a continuous row of concrete blocks about one point two metres cube was placed behind them to form tank traps (there are still a few about the Island now, many used in sea defences).

One night shortly after our troops were evacuated from France, my father was called out as there was thought that the Germans were about to invade, my mother was very apprehensive, and was quite scared when Mr Martin the jeweller (another member of the Home Guard) knocked on the door to call him out, he didn't know he was already out and my mother thought it was the Germans. After a few days the tension eased and things got back to normal.

We saw quite a bit of the battle in the air. At the beginning dog fights were common during the day, the fighters circling above with machine guns clearly heard above the engine noises. On one occasion just before dinner, the aircraft and machine guns were louder than normal, but they were all above the cloud so could not be seen, at least one bullet landed in our garden, I quickly picked it up. It was kept in a drawer for a long time but disappeared when I was a teenager.

About 1943 when the threat of invasion had diminished my grandfather, who was a member of Havant Council, negotiated with the army to allow the locals on the beach. This was done by opening a gap in the barbed wire at Butlins. Eventually more were opened along the whole beach; It was a child's paradise, nobody on the beach except the children and some of the parents. During this time when we were on the beach I saw more of the military events. Wellington bombers adapted to explode magnetic mines flying quite close to the shore, they had a large ring attached to their wings and fuselage, this was magnetised and if the aircraft flew low over the water with a mine on the bottom it would explode it.

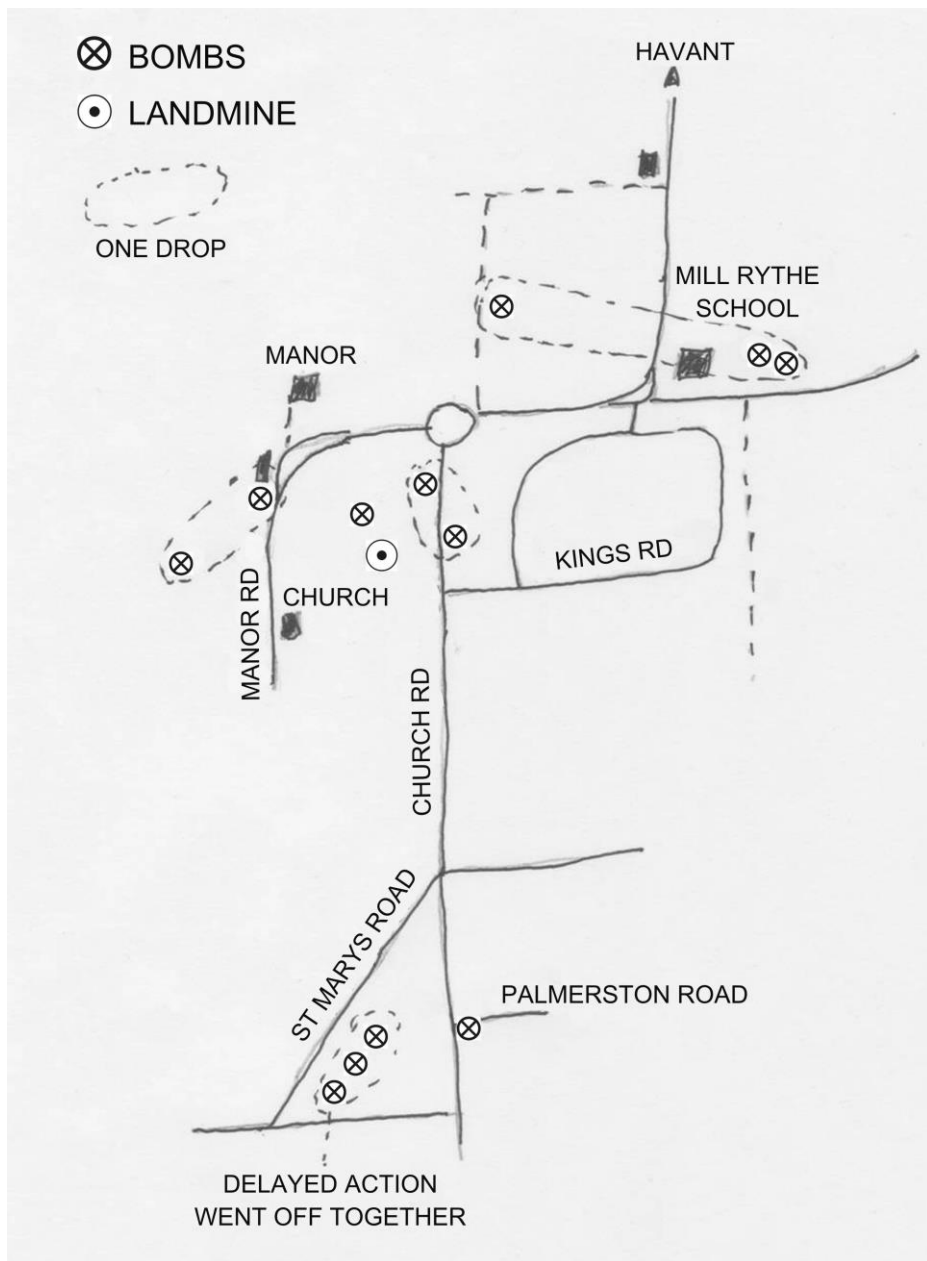
Lone German aircraft flying very high being shelled by anti-aircraft guns from Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and Hayling as it flew over, one I can clearly remember being shot down, the crew tiny specs in the sky when they took to their parachutes. Constellation bombers returning to Thorney Island on fire, their crew turning in a circle over the airfield so aircraft was heading out to sea, the crew bailing out over Thorney, the Constellation disappearing over the horizon towards France still emitting black smoke. Hundreds of American B17's in formations flying high overhead with their vapour trails filling the sky

The Navy had an anti-aircraft gunnery school at Eastney, just across the entrance to Langstone Harbour, they were firing guns all day at targets towed by a variety of different aircraft flying very low. They used to do a circuit which took them over the west end of the beach, and I used to throw stones at them, luckily for me and them I couldn't throw far enough to hit anything.

Spitfires, Hurricanes, Hudsons, Wellingtons, you name it I saw them. And out at sea all the naval ships on the horizon. It was a time when Hayling woke up from the calm of peace time, and it changed for ever. I am sure seeing all these activities convinced me that my future was not on Hayling, I knew that I had to get away and make a life for myself elsewhere. It was at this time I started to take a great interest in all things to do with aircraft. It wasn't just my personal experiences, but also the films and newsreels we all saw. I don't think that my schooling had much to do with it.

During May 1944 Hayling and all of the surrounding mainland became one massive army camp, the fields and woods were filled with troops, There was a camp of tents at the north end of the field in front of the bungalow. My parents invited two soldiers each morning to have a bath and then breakfast with us. They held exercises through the fields and gardens, two soldiers game though our garden one with a Bren gun, I tried to talk to him but he wasn't interested in one small boy and he disappeared round the hedge at the back.

Just before this happened Pat myself and a couple of other children were playing on the beach when two ships quite a long way out turned towards the shore, as they came closer it became clear they were landing craft. The tide was out and as they beached themselves on the sand the American soldiers on board threw chocolates down to us, we ate some and took the rest home.



Sketch map drawn by John Rogers, showing various locations of bomb and landmine drops.



Damage caused to West View, Church Road, the home of Mr R. E. Rogers, by the bomb that dropped nearby on Monday, 9 September 1940 at 9.43 p.m.



Damage to Mrs Crees's house. (*Mrs G. V. Rogers.*)



Damage to Mr Crees's school. (*Mrs G. V. Rogers.*)

Havant and Hayling Island in the Second World War 1939 to 1945

Ralph Cousins

A record of incidents relevant to Hayling Island taken from the diary of Arthur Jones, an Air Raid Warden at Havant, the Hants Control Incident Chart and the Urban District Council of Havant and Waterloo Daily Information Report of Incidents in the Neighbourhood logbook:

1940

August 24. At 15.30 bomb landed on 5 Elm Grove, Hayling Island. Maud Eleanor Spencer, 71, killed and her granddaughter Mary Elizabeth Spencer, 8, injured and died next day in Havant War Memorial Hospital.

November 24. At 22.50 two UXBs (Unexploded bombs) at North Hayling and it was suspected that others fell in Langstone Harbour. Air-raid Southampton. Havant District called upon to send two pumps under the Regional Fire Scheme.

November 29. At 21.00 HE (High explosive) bomb fell in field near island end of Langstone road-bridge doing no damage. [Bert Edney and his wife who were walking home from the Ship Inn were blown off their feet.]

December 5. Between 19.00 and 20.30 at least 12 HE bombs and 200 IBs (Incendary bombs) in the Havant, Bedhampton and Hayling Island districts. Four fires were started in Havant doing some damage before being brought under control. One house in Denvilles was demolished, Petit Cottage, Glenleigh, and the three occupants killed. One body found so far. Some damage to water mains and telephone wires at Hayling Island and several houses slightly damaged.

December 10. It has now been established that 25 HE bombs fell on land in the Havant, Bedhampton and Hayling Island districts on the evening of December 6. Several more fell in Langstone Harbour. Some were of a large calibre. Those that fell in Denvilles and Stockheath forming craters 60 feet (19 metres) across and 10 to 12 feet (3 to 4 metres) deep. The rescue party searching for the bodies at Denvilles have found sufficient pieces to establish the diameter of this bomb was 20 inches (50 cms), which indicates a weight of at least 1100lb (500kg).

December 15. Examination of the IBs used by the enemy in this district so far

has revealed that these have been of pre-war stock, some of them four to five years old. Generally speaking they have not been difficult; to deal with and have been of poor quality but experience in other districts recently point to a better and more modern type being brought in to use and an increasing number being of the explosive type. These bombs are slightly larger and contain a small explosive charge, which acts within two minutes of the bomb igniting scattering molten metal. Instructions have now been received that every small IB should be regarded as likely to contain an explosive charge and should not be approached without some protection to the face and hands from the molten metal thrown out by the small explosive.

December 16. About 21.00 two HE bombs fell at Salterns, Hayling Island causing no damage or casualties.

December 28. At 00.38 a Wellington bomber crashed, caught fire and exploded at Thorney Island. Only one of the crew survived. [he landed in Corncourt's Field, Eastney, North Hayling. He was found hiding in a chicken house as he thought he was in Holland.]

1941

January 17. At 23.18 three HE bombs and one UXB fell at Park Lane, Cowplain breaking water, gas and sewer mains and telephone wires. No casualties. At 00.33 two HE bombs fell in field at Stockheath Farm. No casualties. At about 20.30 a British fighter plane crashed at North Hayling, the Polish pilot, Flight Lieutenant Jan Falkowski, baled out and was rescued from the foreshore.

January 20. One HE bomb fell at 22.50 near South Hayling Church causing no damage or casualties.

February 18. At 12.45 an enemy bomber flew over Havant at a low altitude and was engaged by ground posts with machine-guns. Some of the spent bullets falling in the streets. At 14.30 four HE bombs dropped at Thorney Island causing no damage and no casualties. It is thought that some IBs fell in to the mud between Thorney Island and Warblington Cemetery at the same time.

March 4. Small explosion in Langstone Harbour west of North Hayling Railway Halt at 22.25 which may have been a small bomb or a faulty shell.

March 10. One UXAA (Unexploded ack-ack) shell in centre of Havant to Rowlands Castle road opposite stables in Leigh Park. Traffic diverted, road not

closed. Hole of entry covered with sandbag. 4 HE bombs near Langstone Bridge no damage. 4 HE bombs and several IBs at Horndean Road/Southleigh Road. Slight damage to buildings, one haystack burnt out. An anti-aircraft shell slightly damaged a house in Clovelly Road, Emsworth. One HE bomb and one UXB in sea south of Webb Lane, Hayling Island, two HE bombs and several IBs on Golf Links and ferry causing slight damage to houses and one wooden building burnt out.

March 11 and 12. Owing to exceptional disorganisation of normal communications in Portsmouth, Gosport and Fareham no information was received from Group Control on the 11th March and information, which would have been transmitted by telephone on the 12th of March, has been received by post on the 13th. On the night of 10th/11th considerable damage was done in Portsmouth and Gosport with lesser damage at Fareham from both HE bombs and IBs. The parts chiefly affected were Broad Street, The Hard and Queen Street, Portsmouth and the waterfront in Gosport. Some damage was caused to Naval Establishments and essential services were considerably interfered with. At 20.30 several incendiary bombs were dropped at Widley and Purbrook Heath but were quickly dealt with and a fire at Purbrook Heath was soon got under control. At 23.30 four HE bombs were dropped in the open field near Mengham, Hayling and one UXB at North Hayling no damage, no casualties. Bombs were also dropped and caused some damage at Selsey, in the Isle of Wight, and in the Hants County Area. On the night of 11th/12th there was intermittent bombing in Portsmouth, Gosport, Southampton, Isle of Wight and Hants and West Sussex generally damage was slight and casualties few. At 22.38 an HE bomb was dropped in the searchlight field at Langstone Road, Havant causing some damage to buildings and telephone wires, but no casualties. At 22.40 several IBs, many of the explosive type, were dropped at the anti-aircraft gunsite, Crookhorn Lane, Purbrook, in the Belmont district of Bedhampton and on Portsdown Hill. Six small fires were started but were quickly dealt with by the Police, Wardens and Auxiliary Fire Service. One casualty from burns was treated in hospital. The known casualties in the Group area on the 12th were 87 killed, approx. 400 seriously injured and approx. 200 slightly injured.

March 13. At 22.30 one UXB fell near to Tournurbury Lane, Hayling Island.

March 17. At 04.15 one HE bomb was dropped on the Golf Links at Hayling Island.

April 9. At 22.37 four HE bombs fell in Langstone Harbour about one mile north-

west of Hayling water tower. At 00.27 five HE bombs dropped behind Hayling Council School on open ground.

April 11. Four HE bombs in Havant Thicket. At 02.45 eight HE bombs dropped in Langstone Harbour between Farlington and Langstone Bridge followed by IBs in north Hayling immediately south of the bridge. One UXB at Gutner and several HE bombs in Chichester Harbour.

April 17. At 22.00 magnetic mine dropped in garden of Saxted House, Tower Street, Emsworth causing considerable damage. At 22.15 two magnetic mines exploded north of Emsworth in creek of Chichester Harbour. Considerable damage to about 100 houses in High Street, South Street, West Street, North Street and adjacent streets. Two slight casualties. HE bombs in Almeda Road off Fir Copse Road, Purbrook. 15 houses demolished one or two slight casualties. Damage to water, gas and electric mains. Woman [Lily May Mould, 27] died at 43 Privett Road from shock of explosion. Magnetic mine in copse 50 yards south of Stakes Road, Waterlooville towards rear of Purbrook Boys Industrial School. Damage to houses no casualties. UX magnetic mine located at Oaklands, Stakes Hill Road, Waterlooville. Houses within 400 yards evacuated. Road closed. At 22.05 magnetic mine in Queens Enclosure, London Road, Cowplain on soft surface. Damage to properties in Park Lane and London Road. No casualties. At 22.30 magnetic mine at Lovedean Lane. seven houses demolished and one part demolished. One man killed and one woman seriously injured. One man, two women and one boy slightly injured, road closed to traffic. A large number of bombs were dropped on the Sinah Warren, Hayling Island gun site killing six gunners and injuring 30. Three guns were put out of action.

During the nights April of 17th and 18th five enemy aircraft were destroyed during an attack on the Portsmouth district with parachute mines, HE bombs and IBs. Incidents occurred at Emsworth, East Denvilles, East Leigh Park, Portsdown Hill, Bedhampton, Purbrook, Stakes, Waterlooville, Lovedean, Stoke and several points in south Hayling Island causing considerable damage including houses demolished and a few casualties at most incidents some being fatal. 72 parachute mines were dropped in 11 different parts of the district the heaviest attacks being at the southern end of Waterlooville and south Hayling Island.[Unexploded land mines north of the Maypole and at the junction of St Catherines Road and Sinah Lane near to Four Gables and on Pilsey Island. More than 30 land mines, 96 HE bombs and thousands of IBs fell on Hayling Island.

April 23. Four HE bombs at Gable Head, Hayling Island damaging a searchlight and destroying three houses. No casualties. Two HE bombs at Eastoke on beach.

May 9. At 19.38 a tug [*The Irishman*] and dredger were blown up by presumably a mine dropped on the night of April 17/18th in Langstone Harbour. Casualties one dead one injured six missing.

June 9. The first Air raid Warning was received in this district at 00.53. on June 7, 1940. At this hour on June 7, 1941 the total time spent under warnings between the two being 1137 hours 27 minutes. Two HE bombs dropped in Langstone Harbour near to the Binness Islands.

June 14. One UX anti-aircraft shell at High Lawn near Leigh Park House. Police report UXB not shell. Diameter of hole 9 inches (24 cms) depth 5 foot (1½ metres). 13 HE bombs dropped near to Stakes Hill Lodge and Crookhorn Farm. At 02.50 500 IBs were dropped in Manor Road and Church Road Hayling Island and were all speedily dealt with. At 03.15 three UXBs were dropped near Gable Head, Hayling Island and exploded at 11.50 damaging some houses and utility company's mains. At 06.32 two HE bombs exploded near Mengham, Hayling Island.

June 21. At 12.10 a British plane made a forced landing and caught fire at North Hayling. [Blenheim bomber carrying money.] Crew escaped uninjured before two bombs exploded.

During one of these raids the Congregational Church was destroyed by a land mine

1943

February 26, Milk retailers in the Havant and Emsworth area, and elsewhere, pressed by the Government to amalgamate so reducing the number of milkmen and their vehicles on the streets. They had done so locally by forming a company, Country Dairies Ltd.

August 15. Heavy raid for two hours last night. Saw two planes in searchlights. Bombs at Hayling and Emsworth.

August 16. At 00.15 oil bomb and IBs behind waterworks in Brockhampton Road. Havant. No casualties. Damage to corn in field. 00.17. One case of IBs at brickfield, Sandy brow, Purbrook. At 00.20 one HE bomb dropped at Manor

Farm Cottages, Manor Road, Hayling Island. One woman, two children killed, one man, two women and four children slightly injured. At 00.30 HE bomb south of First Aid Depot, Church Road, Hayling Island. No casualties Severe damage to houses in Church Road. At 00.35 IBs in grounds of Emsworth Cottage Hospital. No damage. No casualties. At 00.45 one UXB in house in Bath Road, Emsworth. No casualties. Evacuation of 10 men, 14 women and 13 children to Rest Centre. Road closed. At 00.40 one HE bomb at 1, Harold Terrace, The Gardens, Emsworth. One house demolished and 11 badly damaged. No casualties. Two men, four women and seven children evacuated to Rest Centre. One HE bomb in field west of recreation ground. No damage. No casualties. At 01.38 two HE bombs at Poplar Grove, Hayling Island, one woman seriously injured, one man slightly injured. Woman subsequently died at First Aid Post. At 01.45 two HE bombs on shore south of Copse Lane, Hayling Island. Four houses in Church Road slightly damaged but no casualties. At 01.50 Petrol tank from aeroplane fell in Southwood Road, Hayling Island. No damage or casualties. Petrol distributed over the road. Home Guard in control. Two HE bombs at Havant Thicket. Search being made.

August 17. Ban imposed on entry into the area by anyone who did not live or work here, this applied to most of the South Coast. You had to show your identity card [everyone had one, I still have mine] when asked to do so by the civil or military police. The area was steadily becoming a military camp in preparation for the invasion of Europe – and the Germans knew that.

1944

January 13. American troops begin to appear in the district. [A most welcome sight as they brought American chewing gum (Wrigleys) with them, which we could not get. Every American we saw was greeted with the request: 'Got any gum chum?']

April 1. Tightening of the travel ban. Heavy troop movements in the district.

April 18. First daylight raid for months. Plane shot down at Southampton.

April 27. Alert at 01.30. Raid on district soon follows. First three red flares, bombs in Brooklands Road, Bedhampton. One slight casualty, otherwise the only damage was from blast. Later big chandelier flares over Portsmouth. Heavy gunfire but spasmodic. Few raiders but they seemed a lot. Another alert at 03.00 but no trouble developed. Between 02.00 and 02.15 HE bombs dropped west of

Purbrook, west of Bedhampton and west of Stoke water tower Hayling Island and west of Rowlands Castle golf links. One seriously injured casualty at Bedhampton and several buildings damaged by bomb blast.

May 16. Six HE bombs near to South Hayling station some damage to houses and water mains. No casualties. Two HE bombs fell in marshland at Northney.

May 22. King George VI seen in Bartons Road on his way to Rowlands Castle to review the troops.

June 5. A railwayman said that 'picnic' is likely to start tonight! And it does start tonight. Before going to bed at 00.15 A marvellous procession of bombers with navigation lights on seen flying fast and low East South East.

June 6. At 08.00 announced on the on the wireless (radio) that new phase in air war had begun and that Germans were reporting attempted landings on French Channel coast. Opening of invasion later confirmed. At 20.30 about 100-200 gliders towed by bombers over low flying East South East direction. Bombers returning 1½ hours later.

June 8. Alert at 01.30 for about 10 minutes. Pre-invasion conference between Churchill, Smuts, Eisenhower, Eden, etc. took place in a train at Droxford last weekend.

June 16. Alerts at 05.00 and 06.00. No noise locally. Hear that last night Germans sent over Pilotless Aircraft Bombs [V-1 Flying Bombs later referred to as 'flies'] for the second time, first time not announced. They seem to be terrifying weapons. A quiet night.

June 24. In the past week nine 'flies' are known to have landed within a radius of about 20 miles of Havant – all of them travelling in a North West direction, three having gone beyond this district, the rest having fallen short of it. Two have actually passed over; three more would probably have done so had they continued their flights a bit further. All of them have fallen either in open country or in the water and although some blast damage to buildings has resulted there has only been one slightly injured casualty.

July 14. Only one alert but hear that 59 'flies' had landed within 15 miles of Portsmouth on July 10.

July 20. Attempted assassination of Adolf Hitler.

July 22. Alert last night followed at once by 'fly' which shut off its engine overhead and we waited in shelter for explosion, which was not as near as we had expected. Later, hear that it fell in Langstone Harbour.

July 25. Continuous waves of heavy bombers (ours) this morning from 09.30 to 10.30 preceded new attack by U.S. forces in Normandy. Germany declares 'Total War'. Suspected that gas will be used. [In the event it was not.]

August 14. The 'flies' had been, or about to be superseded by the even more dreaded and more devastating V-2 rocket bombs, which were directed against the London area but we were not troubled by them.

September 7. Blackout to be partially lifted on September 17. Great news.

October 12. Havant street lamps re-lit, but half shaded.

October 24. Alert at 01.00, first since August 23. Hear a bang, presumably a 'fly'. So war is not over for us yet. Amusing to see lighted windows as people get up.

1945

February 27. At 14.30 see large fleet of Lancaster bombers going over.

May 7. Announcement of end of the war expected all day and at 21.00. BBC announces tomorrow as VE day. Children very excited.

May 8. VE (Victory in Europe) day.

August 15. VJ (Victory in Japan) day.

A number of events took place in Havant Park. In May 1943 a display was carried out by local platoons and sections of the Home Guard. After a march past, training displays were given in front of a large crowd of spectators which included: recruits' progress (Purbrook Company); bayonet training and unarmed combat (Waterlooville Company); machine-gun training (teams from Hayling and Emsworth); spigot mortar and battle- drill (Havant Company); and a spectacular finale; an assault on the pavilion (Havant Company). Dummy ammunition was fired; smoke bombs let off and thunder flashes thrown. The 'battle' raged for some time much to the delight of us children. I have never seen anything quite so exciting happen out there since.

We were of course free to travel about more and in particular being able to ride on the Hayling Billy and go and see the sandy beach we had been told about that

had been out of bounds during the war. Yes it was sandy, more so than it is today, However we had to watch out for the patches of oil, pieces of shrapnel and rusty barbed wire and negotiate the large concrete blocks and barricades made of scaffold poles erected in order to make an invasion difficult. Some entertainment was provided by the anti-aircraft gun battery at Eastney practising by firing live ammunition at a target towed behind an aeroplane going round in circles. They did not hit it very often but on one occasion a lucky shot cut its towline and it dropped into the sea. At another time a Spitfire flew very low along the whole the length of the beach, flown no doubt by a handsome young pilot out to impress the girls. At least he was one of the lucky ones who had survived the war.

One place in particular we children liked to go was the foreshore at Langstone where there were large hull sections of an old submarine. We had been told it was the remains of a German one that had intended to attack ships in Portsmouth Harbour but had sailed in to Chichester Harbour by mistake. It had then run aground at Pook Lane Quay and the crew captured by local people armed with pitchforks. All this added some flavour to our imaginative play. We were therefore much disappointed when we later found out it had in fact been a British one, HMS *F2*, that had been purchased in 1922 by Mr C. Welton a scrap metal dealer from Fratton. After removing any valuable metal the hull was cut up and used for sea defence purposes. All that remained was taken away a few years ago as it was considered to be too hazardous for modern children to play on.

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IMPORTANT WAR DATES

1939

- Sept 1 Germany invades Poland.
- 3 Great Britain and France declare war on Germany: the British Expeditionary Force began to leave for France
- Dec 13 Battle of the River Plate.

1940

- Apr 9 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway.
- May 10 Germany invaded the Low Countries (Holland and Belgium).
- June 3 Evacuation from Dunkirk completed.
- 8 British troops evacuated from Norway.
- 11 Italy declared war on Great Britain.
- 22 France capitulated.
- 29 Germans occupied the Channel Islands.
- Aug 8 to Oct 31 German air offensive against Great Britain (Battle of Britain).
- Oct 28 Italy invaded Greece.
- Nov 11 to 12 Successful attack on the Italian fleet in Taranto Harbour.
- Dec 9 to 11 Italian invasion of Egypt defeated at the Battle of Sidi Barrani.

1941

- March 11 Lease-Lend Bill passed in the United States of America.
- 28 Battle of Cape Matapan.
- April 6 Germany invaded Greece.
- Apr 12 to Dec 9 Siege of Tobruk.
- May 20 Formal surrender of remnants of Italian Army in Abyssinia.
- May 20 to 31 Battle of Crete.
- May 27 German battleship *Bismark* sunk.
- June 22 Germany invaded Russia.
- Aug 12 Terms of the Atlantic Charter agreed.
- Nov 18 British offensive launched in the Western Desert.
- Dec 7 Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour.
- 8 Great Britain and the United States of America declared war on Japan.

1942

- Feb 15 Fall of Singapore.
- April 16 George Cross awarded to Malta.
- Oct 23 to Nov 4 German and Italian army defeated at El Alamein.
- Nov 8 British and American forces land in North Africa.

1943

- Jan 31 The remnants of the 6th German Army surrendered at Stalingrad.
- May Final victory over the U-Boats in the Atlantic.
- May 13 Axis forces in Tunisia surrender.
- July 10 Allies invaded Sicily.
- Sept 3 Allies invaded Italy.
- 8 Italy capitulated.
- Dec 16 German battleship *Scharnhorst* sunk off North Cape.

1944

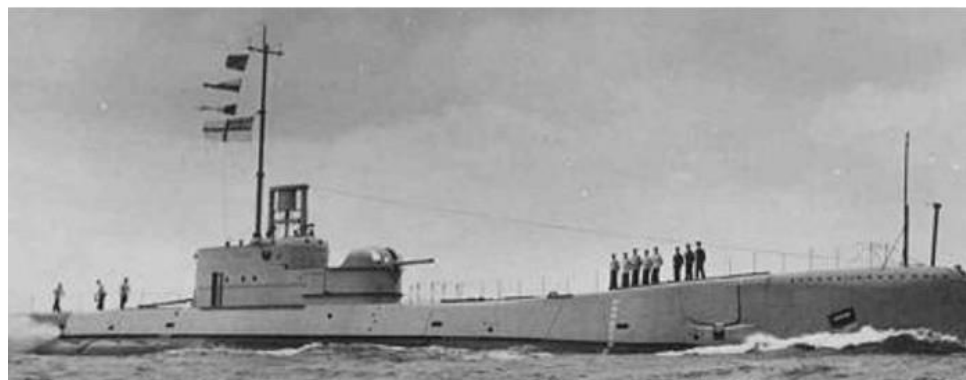
- Jan 22 Allied troops landed at Anzio.
- June 4 Rome captured.
- 6 Allies landed in Normandy.
- 13 Flying bomb (V1) attack on Britain started.
- June Defeat of Japanese invasion of India.
- Aug 15 Paris liberated.
- Sep 3 Brussels liberated.
- 8 First rocket-bomb (V2) fell on England.
- 17 to 26 The Battle of Arnhem.
- Oct 20 The Americans re-landed in the Philippines.

1945

- Jan 17 Warsaw liberated.
- Mar 20 British recaptured Mandalay.
- 23 British crossed the Rhine.
- Apr 25 Opening of Conference of the United Nations at San Francisco.
- May 2 German forces in Italy surrendered.
- 3 Rangoon recaptured.
- 5 All the German forces in Holland, North West Germany and Denmark surrendered unconditionally.
- 9 Unconditional surrender of Germany to the allies ratified in Berlin.
- June 10 Australian troops landed in Borneo.
- Aug 6 First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
- 8 Russia declared war on Japan.
- 9 Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.
- 14 The Emperor of Japan broadcast the unconditional surrender of his country.
- Sept 5 British forces re-entered Singapore.



Members of the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties pose for a group photograph at Fort Blockhouse prior to D-Day operations. Less than 200 men won over 90 medals and commendations in 3 years.



HM Submarine *Thames*. Sunk in the North Sea on 2/3 August 1940. 62 men lost, two from Havant, one my cousin Leonard Harris and the other Henry Beach the brother of Gordon Beach the Gable Head newsagent.



HMS *Havant* entering Dover with troops from Dunkirk on May 31, 1940.



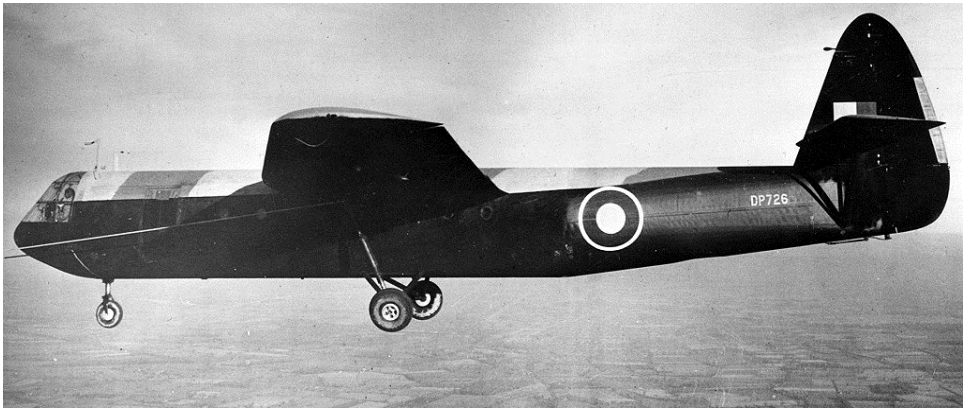
National Savings Week, May 1944. Dick Smart from Hayling with his model traction engine at Havant railway station. His daughter Evie, an officer in the Wrens, is seated behind him. The boy wearing a cap is Ralph Cousins.



Anderson air-raid shelter.



Morrison indoor air-raid shelter.



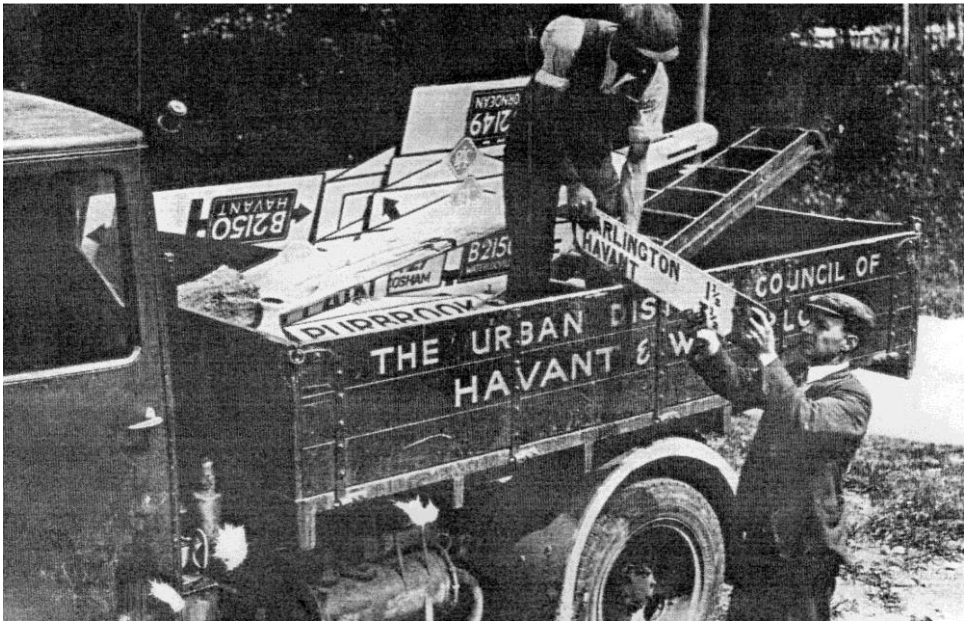
Horsa glider, parts for which were made at the Langstone Airspeed factory.



Heavy Bomber taking off with a Horsa glider under tow.



V-1 Flying Bomb (Vergeltungswaffe-1, Retaliation Weapon-1).



Havant council workmen removing road direction signs.



Bill New with the council's water bowser, which was equipped to spray buildings in the event of a gas attack.



September 1942.

Havant District
Council employed
women road workers
to look after
the white traffic
lines.



Members of the Home Guard demonstrating their 'Special Weapons'.



British First World War submarine, HMS *F2*, being broken up at Pook Lane Quay c.1932. (*JC Colbourne*).

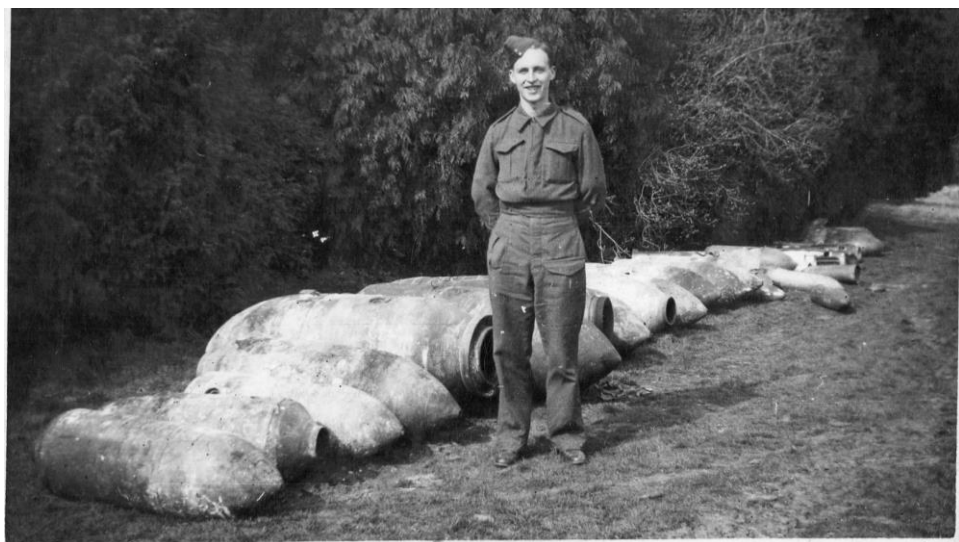


William Joyce,
nicknamed
Lord Haw-Haw,
at Radio Hamburg.

William Joyce, who broadcast anti-British propaganda, was a familiar face in Havant before the war when he was secretary to the Marquis of Tavistock at Warblington House, Pook Lane, Havant.



Wrens and officers at HMS *Northney*. Sitting far left is Molly Adams née Mercer. (*Elaine Shimbart*).



A collection of unexploded bombs (UXBs).



Home Guard parade in Havant Park.



Crashed German bomber at Rowlands Castle.

HMS *Oribi*



In March 1942, after a successful 'Warship Week' National Savings campaign, HMS *Oribi* was adopted by the civil community of Havant.

HMS *Oribi* was originally to be named HMS *Observer* but when the South African Government sponsored the build her name was changed to that of a small South African antelope. She was launched on 14th January 1941.

In 1942 Havant and Waterloo Area Savings Committee fixed their 'Warship Week' for 7–14th March, when they hoped to raise £210,000, the cost of the hull of a destroyer. In July 1942 the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that although the total investment of £189,248 15s. 6d. fell short of the target by £20,000, the Havant area had been granted permission to adopt the destroyer HMS *Oribi*. The local paper later reported that the Admiralty had given instructions for a replica of the ship's badge [an Oribi on a blue field] to be made for presentation to the Havant district. In return the Havant area would present a commemorative plaque to the ship, the cost of which would be met by the local savings committee. At about this time Mr Boscott of Havant and Waterloo Urban District Council donated his souvenir pair of Oribi antlers to the local savings committee.

THIS
LOG BOOK

*which will record the operational activities
of an Aircraft*

is a tribute to the success achieved by

Havant & Waterloo

SAVINGS COMMITTEE

in the

WINGS FOR VICTORY

NATIONAL SAVINGS CAMPAIGN • 1943

Target: -£ 190,000

Achievement: -£ 192,851.

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2 SPITFIRES, BEAUFIGHTER,
LANCASTER, HURRICANE,
LIBERATOR, WELLINGTON
STIRLING, MOSQUITO
ANSON, HUDSON.

Wings for Victory National Savings Campaign, 1943. The Havant and Waterloo Savings Committee raised a record sum of £192,851 in a very short time. The total represented the cost of 11 war planes.

Wartime Memories

R.B.1
18
MINISTRY OF
FOOD
1943-1944

SERIAL NO. 1
BP 380280

RATION BOOK

Surname *Pharston* Initials *Gilson*
Address *East Walton*
Kings Lynn

IF FOUND
RETURN TO
ANY FOOD
OFFICE

F.O. CODE No.
E-8
3

CLOTHING BOOK
1943-44 *General CBI*

This book must not be used until the holder's name and full postal address have been written below.

HOLDER'S NAME *WHEELER, ORLANDO*
(in BLOCK letters)
ADDRESS *145 WATERFIELD AVENUE*
(in BLOCK letters)
WATERFORD

Detach this book at once and keep it safely - it is your only means of buying clothing. HOLD PAGES I-VII IN ONE HAND AND **CUT ALONG THIS LINE**

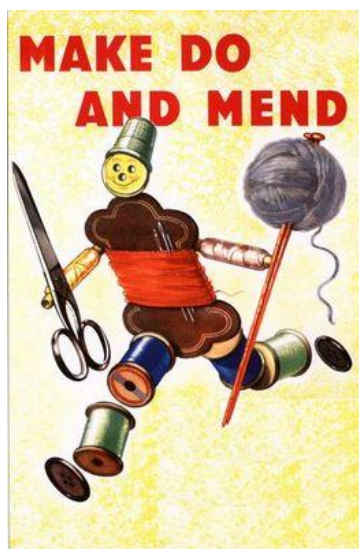
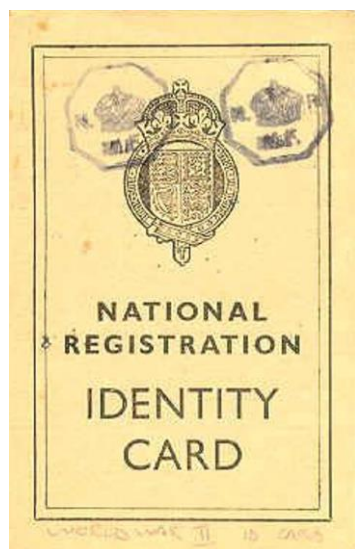
Holder's National Registration No.
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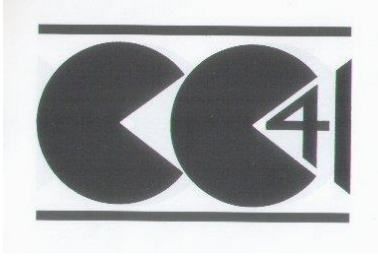
FOOD OFFICE
If found, please hand in this book at any Food Office or Police Station

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X

PAGE 1



Utility Mark



'CC 41' Civilian Clothing 1941.



Don't take the Squander Bug when you shopping.





8th June, 1946

TO-DAY, AS WE CELEBRATE VICTORY,

I send this personal message to you and all other boys and girls at school. For you have share in the hardships and dangers of a total war and you have shared no less in the triumph of allied nations.



I know you will always feel proud to belong to a country which was capable of such supreme effort; proud, too, of parents and elder brothers and sisters who by their courage, endurance and enterprise brought victory. May these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish among the nations of the world unity and peace.

George R.I.

Message from King George VI to all school children.